バカとテストと召喚獣 6

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待望の夏休み！　だが、悲惨な結果に終わった期末試験によりそのまま補習に突入した明久とFクラスの面々。暑苦しい鉄人の授業を黙々と受けていたある日、「そういえば召喚システムの点数がリセットされたって話はどうなった？」と気づいた彼らは、白金の腕輪を使って召喚獣を喚び出してみる。しかし、そこに現れたのは古今東西の物の怪に姿を変えた召喚獣だった――!?「友達はボール！」（by 新種妖怪・坂本雄二）負けられない肝試し対決で贈る第6巻!!

Famitsu Bunko

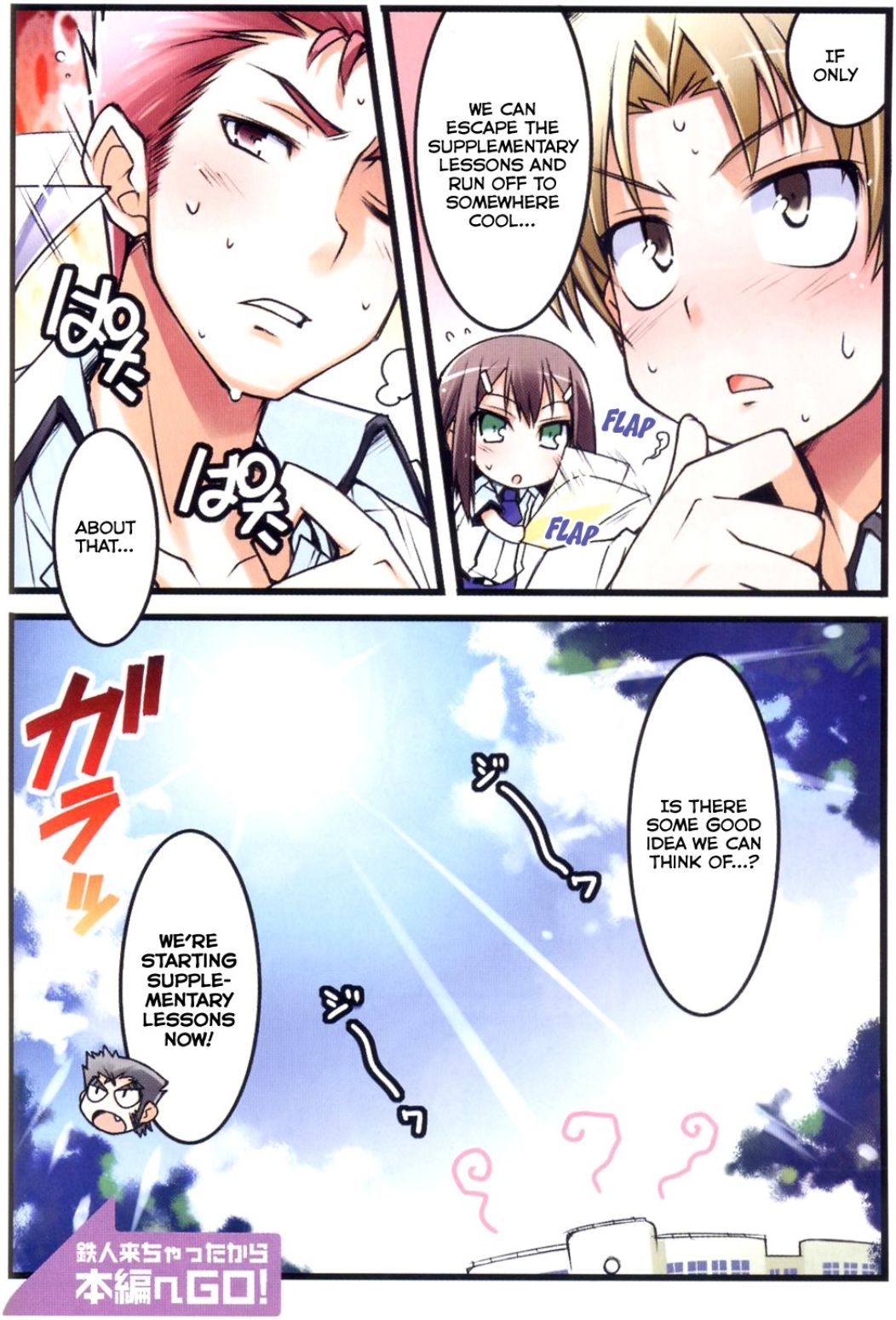
CHIRP
YAWN
CHIRP...
吉井明久
Akihisa Yoshii
バカとテストと召喚獣 6
GOOD MORNING, AKI-KUN.
GOOD MORNING, NEE-SAN.
吉井玲
Akira Yoshii

WHAT ARE YOU DOING SO EARLY IN THE MORNING?
AHH, ABOUT THIS?
IN FACT.
パタ…
I HAVE TO CATCH THE FLIGHT AND GO BACK TODAY.
SO I'M GETTING READY.
EH...?

JUST NOW
YOU WERE GLEEING SECRETLY THAT NEE-SAN'S GOING ABOUT TO LEAVE, RIGHT?
THAT,
THAT'S NOT TRUE!
I'LL FEEL LONELY WITHOUT YOU AROUND, NEE-SAN!

–FINISH THE MOVING PROCEDURES IN 10 DAYS.
AND MOVE BACK HOME.
I SEE. SO YOU'LL FEEL LONELY TOO.
YOU'RE REALLY A SWEET KID, AKI-KUN.
U, UN.
WELL~ IT'S A PITY WHEN YOU FINALLY MANAGE TO COME OVER AFTER A LONG TIME, NEE-SAN.
EH? WHY?
HOWEVER.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY TOO MUCH, AKI-KUN.
FOR AKI-KUN'S SAKE, NEE-SAN WILL–

–SPEAKING OF WHICH,
IT'S REALLY HOT TODAY.
REALLY, IT'S TORTURE FOR US TO HAVE TO STUDY ON SUCH A DAY.
...VERY HOT.
木下秀吉
Hideyoshi Kinoshita
坂本雄二
Yuuji Sakamoto
土屋康太
(ムッツリーニ)
Kouta Tsuchiya
2-F
AKIHISA-KUN.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE REASON, BUT IT SEEMS TO BE PRETTY BIG...
IT'S LIKE... HE COMPLETELY GAVE UP ON HIMSELF...
LOOKS LIKE HE HAS SOMETHING ON HIS MIND...?
島田美波
Minami Shimada
姫路瑞希
Mizuki Himeji


IF ONLY
WE CAN ESCAPE THE SUPPLEMENTARY LESSONS AND RUN OFF TO SOMEWHERE COOL...
FLAP
FLAP
はぁ
はぁ
ABOUT THAT...
ガラッ
WE'RE STARTING SUPPLE-MENTARY LESSONS NOW!
ジーッ
ジーッ
IS THERE SOME GOOD IDEA WE CAN THINK OF...?
鉄人来ちゃったから
本編へGO!

HIDEYOSHI KINOSHITA

OBAKECHOUCHIN

GOZU & MEZU

"...Yuuji"

"What is it, Shouko?

"Until when will the special supplementary lesson continue?"

"I think end of this week to the utmost. Really, even though the first semester finally ended too, to still have to go to school everyday, does that hag not understand the meaning of summer holiday?"

"....But, it can't be helped for Yuuji and everyone in F class. Since you usually skip classes a lot."

"Well, you have a point there.... Rather than that, why are you going to school everyday? A class doesn't have supplementary lessons right?"

"...There's no supplementary lessons, but we have a summer short course."[1]

"Summer short course? If I'm not wrong, that's preparation for the college entrance exam right?"

"...Un"

"Yare yare. To go to school even during holidays, you're really enthusiastic aren't you? As expected of A class-sama."

"....It has nothing to do with A class. Yuuji is there, so I go to school."

"You're still spouting that...."

"....If Yuuji's not going to school, then I'm also not going. Whether there's a summer short course or not."

"Aaah. Got it, got it."

"...If Yuuji's not going to the wedding place, then I will bring you there. Whether there's any intention to marry or not."

"It sounds like a cool line, but remember that it's a splendid human rights

violation! Or rather, if it becomes like that, I will make sure to resist with all my power!"

"....Resistance is futile. Because I will do my best."

"Why are you doing your best on something like that! Don't waste your effort!"

"...Before"

"Aan?"

"....Before, Yoshii said this."

"What? What did that idiot say?"

"....[I can do my best for the people that I like]"

"That's not it, okay!? The implication of what he said wasn't that at all okay!?"

"...Lately, I also think like that."

"What do you mean by also! Even if you look for it, you're the only one in the world who would think like that!"

"....With Yuuji, I will fight without any petty trick straightly with my arm strength for a marriage."

"What does marriage have to do with arm strengyaaaa! My skull! My skull lets out a creaking voice!"

"...Will you, marry me?"

"I won't! Or rather, I can't! It's too soon you know!"

"...Ah...is that so..."

"Ze...ze... Do you understand now...."

"...Un. I was too hasty...."

"That's right. I'm still 17 years old you know? Even if I wanted to marry - "

"...At this hour, the wedding place and the civil office haven't opened yet."

"That's not the problem you know!?"

"...Un. I know. Just joking..."

".....How do I say this, you, you're steadily getting stupid aren't you...."

"...So mean."

"It's the truth."

"....So mean."

"Keh."

"....But, Yuuji"

"Haa?"

"...That remark earlier, does that mean you will marry me when you turn 18?"

"Geho geho! What are you spouting about!"

"...I'm looking forward to it."

"You know.... Until when do you plan to keep spouting those words.... It's time for you to return to reality."

"...It's alright."

"Alright? What's alright?"

"....Because no matter what, I will always like Yuuji."

"Geho geho!"

First question

Please change the following words into English

""

Himeji Mizuki's answer

"Spanish"

Teacher's comment

One of the basic English words, isn't it. Sometimes there are people who forget to write the first letter, S, as a capital letter. Please remain vigilant against those kinds of careless mistakes.

Tsuchiya Kouta's answer

"Speines-"

Teacher's comment

I wonder if you wanted to write "Speinese", just like the form in "Japanese". Too bad, but it's wrong.

Yoshii Akihisa's answer

"Spaget-"

Teacher's comment

No matter how I try to interpret this otherwise, I can't see this as anything other than, you were going to write "Spaghetti" as the answer.

TETSUJIN

The finals were over, it's a period where we're covered by an indescribable sense of freedom. The number of days left until July ends became just a few more. The loud voice of the cicada and the cumolonimbus that covered the surrounding skies, the signs that signaled that true summer had come were being painted all around us.

The season where the burning rays of sun rain on us - something that a girl who's mindful about getting sunburned might hate.

Not only sunburn. The season called summer is hot, noisy, and even insects come out.

But, even so, for me, this season is the one I like the most in going through the whole year.

Passing through the cold winter, the season where life starts to bud, spring.

The color of the mountain change from green into red, the season where preparations against the visiting cold wave start, autumn.

The air is clear, the season where you can feel the shine of the stars closer than usual, winter.

Even each of the other seasons have their own mountains of good things.

But, inspite of all that, I feel that compared to the other season, the season called summer always has something special.

The boiling heat, the bug's self-assertion that breaks your eardrums, even the clamor of the baseball club that you can hear from the campus, all of them are the spices to enjoy this special season.

Going outside, I wanted to feel the heat that can only be felt during this period. Frowning a little toward the bustling clamor, I wanted to bask in the burning sun rays. Wiping the unstoppable sweat, I wanted to move my body as much as I can. That's the right way to enjoy the season called summer, the period of time called broad daylight wasn't it.

That's right. Now is the special season called summer which can make your heart

dance. That's why -

(Yuuji, let's run. From this hell's jail of the soul.)

(Nicely said Akihisa. I'm already fed up with this iron-fist-supplementary-lesson full course.)

-That's why, we decided to run away from Tetsujin's supplementary lesson.

(In the first place, to still have lessons even on summer holiday is a mistake, isn't it? Moreover, most of the people in this class are males. Let alone study, it's hard enough to breath inside here isn't it.)

My bad company, Sakamoto Yuuji, who sat right beside me frowned his full-of-roughness face.

(And additionally, the one doing the supplementary lesson is Ironman too.... He's so sultry even in the winter, in this circumstances, looking at Ironman is just like a torture.)

At the platform, the well muscled hot-blooded teacher, Nishimura-sensei a.k.a Ironman was continuing the supplementary lesson without even showing a drop of sweat. The reason he didn't even slightly show any form of being worn-out was because of his trained physical strength through his hobby of triathlon.

(For Himeji to still be able to take notes seriously in this situation.... Is she a monster?)

(Just as expected of someone who has the capability of A-class's valedictorian - is what I wanted to say, but Himeji-san's body is weak isn't it. I wonder if she will be okay.... Lately it seems she's in a good condition, but I'm still worried.)

For the time being, at least she got the window-seat position where the ventilation is good, but the best position under the shadow of the pillar was already given to someone else. As long as she didn't forget to keep hydrated, I didn't think anything bad will happen suddenly....

(Ironman is pretty considerate about that thinking so it should be alright shouldn't it. Even if he looks like that, depending on who the other party is, he's pretty considerate of them)

(Un..... he does look well at who the other party is doesn't he....)

That's why we're placed at the furthest ridge from the window where the heat from the sun is strongest and the ventilation is the worse. This is extreme discrimination.

(So, Yuuji, how do you plan to slip out? The opponent is that Ironman so if we're caught it will be hell.)

(Akihisa, you invite others to run away but didn't think about any plan at all?)

(If I already had a plan I would have executed it alone at once.)

(Well, you're right about that. Now, what should we do....)

While discussing with Yuuji in small voices, we're looking for Ironman's weakness. Of course, we didn't have the luxury of being suspected of talking with each other. We suppressed our voices to the lowest volume and moved our mouth like a ventriloquist when we talked. An indispensable technique for the boys in this class that Ironman sets his eyes on.

[-Assume the height of the object before is h, when all of the potential energy in the object is converted into kinetic energy, the formula of the speed of the object in this state, v, is heavily reliant on the gravitational acceleration g and the height h which-]

Ironman was facing us while reading the text book out loud.

It's not a good idea to move now. If we made the slightest stupid move, we would be caught immediately, wouldn't we? I wonder what we should do.....

(Oi, Yoshii, Sakamoto. Are you two going to run away?)

(If you're going to run, we're coming too. We can't stand staying in this hell any

longer.)

(Me too. If I stay like this, I will certainly die from dehydration.)

While being troubled thinking about the way to escape, our classmates that sat nearby start to talk to us. Of course, their faces remained facing the blackboard, and their mouths moved so slightly that you wouldn't think they were currently talking. The only ones that Ironman hadn't set his eyes on are Himeji-san and Minami. The other classmates had already learnt this special skill.

(Then Yuuji, how does the plan where we simultaneously run away with this high number of men sound?)

(Human-wave tactic huh? It's a simple yet reliable tactic... OK, I'm in.)

Yuuji, with his farsightedness that I almost don't understand at all, slightly nodded.

The demon was only Ironman himself. If we all scattered simultaneously in different directions to run away, even Ironman wouldn't be able to catch us all would he.

(Everyone agrees to it right? No resentment for whoever gets caught. If there're no more problems, everyone who wants to do it please nod slightly.)

After saying that, everyone in the class besides Himeji-san, Minami, and Hideyoshi simultaneously nodded. For 47 people out of 50 running away.... even though I'm the one who made the suggestion, but this class really is odd isn't it.

However, the joining of more people means the probability of me getting caught is lower. How convenient.

All that's left is looking for the chance.

[- That means, the speed of a falling object is independent of the weight of the object itself. But, unlike the ideal condition in this theory, in reality there's also the resistance of the air. The reason a feather and an iron ball doesn't fall with the same speed is largely because of this air resistance. When it's inserted into the equation -]

Since the explanation finally reached its climax, Ironman turned to face the blackboard and started to write on it.

There's no way we're going to miss this timing when he finally faces away from us!

When we raised our hips to escape,

"Nobody move!"

""""----!!""""

In that instant, Ironman got a start on us. Impossible! We're found out!?

"You punks.... you've got quite some guts to try to escape don't you. Is my lesson that boring?"

Ironman slowly turned this way and glared at us. Ku...! Just as expected of an inhuman creature. To be able to read our escape from just our presence...!

While we're being afraid of becoming the first victim of the iron fist,

"...Is that so. I didn't realize you were that bored with my lesson. This is my fault for giving a boring lesson."

Unexpectedly Ironman said something like that. Huh? You're not going to hit us?

"As an apology, I will tell you an interesting story in return. ....Himeji, Shimada, Kinoshita, you three close your ears."

Interesting story? That's always welcomed, but I wonder why Himeji-san and the others have to close their ears. If it's something interesting, isn't it better to let everyone hear it?

"That's right. That was a summer more than 10 years ago - "

As if ignoring our questions, Ironman started to weave his words.

"-This was when I was wrestling with an exchange student from Brazil."

""""Gyaaa""""

Damn it! It seems the guys with low resistance are done in by Ironman's sweltering words!

Ironman's wrestling lecture in this scorching condition is just like a death penalty....!

"The opponent was a giant with a height of 195 cm and weight of 120 kg named Gino Grachero. He was a man whose arm was as thick as a female's waist. Even so, I wasn't going to lose. With my 188 cm tall trained body with a 97 kg weight, we clashed from the front..."

"Stop it! Please stop it!"

"My brain! My brain hurts!"

"Mamaaa!"

The sounds of the mind breaking could be heard like a clattering sound.

This is bad! My head is starting to feel strange too! Have to think of a counter-measure soon!

" - But, he mistook wrestling with judo. He did an Ude-hishigi move on me. But, there's no way he could win against this prided biceps of mine. Covered with sweat and with my blood vessels popping out, I continued to resist by not letting my arm get stretched. Then, the other party started to go around my head without delay, and while pressing that bulky chest muscle of his to my face he started to do Kame-shiho-gatame - "

"Guaaaaa! No more! I don't want to close my eyes! The worst image is clinging to the back of my eyelids and it won't come off!"

"He's not waking up! Fukumura's not waking up! Oi, get a hold of yourself!"

"Air! I need cool and fresh air!"

In this Abikyoukan hell-like situation, to bear the mental attack, I was continuously looking at our class' 3 girls.

First was the girl who didn't understand what's going on and kept her ears closed while staring blankly at us, Himeji Mizuki-san. That gentle hair, that fluffy atmosphere, she's a girl that looks as if her whole body is formed of healing aura. Brilliant mind, satisfactory physical growth, killer cooking, she's far above the normal level in all those categories. Just looking at her is enough to escape from this mental attack, and just remembering the taste of her cooking is enough to send you to the other world.

Next was the girl who's looking at us with a shocked expression while plugging her ears, Shimada Minami-san. A girl whose characteristics are her ponytail, pretty legs, and slender body. A precious girl in the class who we can talk to without worry, but just remembering her high attack power that she displays in her joint-lock technique is enough to make cold sweat run down my back. Well, even that would be refreshment in this situation so I couldn't say that it's something not to be grateful for I guess.

The last one was the classmate who understood everything and sympathized with us while pushing his ears, Kinoshita Hideyoshi. There's a little sweat at Hideyoshi's eyebrows because of this heat. If it's hot, it would have been better if he would just wear the more breezy girl's uniform too. No, rather than uniform, how about wearing a one piece dress. Wearing a white one piece dress fluttering in the wind and standing on a plateau Hideyoshi. Un. It sure feels refreshing imagining that.

" - and then, up till the time limit, we continued to attack and defend using Newaza[2] - N? What's wrong you guys? Already downed?"

When I noticed it, almost every one of my classmates were already prostrating on the tea table while losing consciousness.

"Really, no choice then. Let's have a 10 minute break. Reflect on your actions for trying something stupid like escaping."

After giving a gesture to the three people who were closing their ears that they could remove their hands, Ironman instructed them to rest and then sat at the teacher's chair. It looked like even though we got some break time, he didn't have any intention of going out of the classroom. I wonder if it's because he's still wary about us escaping?

In this class that's filled with dead bodies everywhere, the few survivors approach us.

"Uhm, Akihisa-san. What happened here? Everyone looks like they're suffering...."

Himeji-san worriedly looked at the classmates who had fallen flat on their faces at their tea table. Just as expected, she really is kind.

"Uuumm, how do I explain this, it's some kind of verbal punishment, or rather you could say that it's some kind of mental attack...."

If I wanted to explain this, I had to re-tell Ironman's story. Please spare me from that.

"Really, in any case it must have been something stupid again isn't it? It's because you think about something like escaping, of course sensei's going to be mad."

At Himeji-san's side, Minami's looking at me with a chaperoning expression while letting out a sigh.

"Don't say that, Shimada. Akihisa and my seat's positions are bad enough that it can't be helped that we think about escaping. It's around all-the-water-in-our-body-will-evaporate level of bad."

Just like Yuuji said, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that Yuuji and my seat's exposure to the sun were already far past the satisfactory level. The absence of curtains wasn't a problem up until now, but it's because of this kind of period that made me realize the importance of that for the first time. So that thing wasn't just to prevent people outside to see inside huh....

"Is that so? My seat wasn't that hot so I can't understand that."

"The wind passes through mine too so it's still okay."

"It's because our seats are positioned in the place where the sun's exposure is the strongest and the ventilation in the worst. It's really awful."

"How awful is it?"

"Around Akihisa's test mark level."

"On the level that can't be endured by humans then."

What a thing to say.

"But, this seat is really around Yuuji's personality level of awful. Just now when I touched the aluminum part of my pen, I got a light burn."

If a steel plate was laid out, we could make something like a sunny-side egg on it.

"You got a burn? Where?"

"Ah, no. It's not something that bad."

Minami spontaneously took my hand. It seemed she's worried about my burn. Lately, the difference between Minami in attacking mode and when she's in kind mode is large. I wonder what happened. I really can't understand a girl's way of thinking.

"What's this Shimada. Aren't you quite kind to Akihisa?"

"That's right. Minami-chan is too close to Akihisa-kun."

Seeing us like that, Himeji-san and Hideyoshi started to say those words.

"I, it's not like I'm being kind to Aki...! I, it's just that if he's hurt I have to hold back when hitting him...!"

So you're still going to hit me even if I'm injured....

"Even so, I also think that Minami is kind."

"Eh...? Even Aki too, what are you saying."

"You're helpful, notice about sensitive things, care about your little sister too. And also, you can put your love into animals too - as an opposite sex."

"You're still misunderstanding that!?"

The last part was Minami's big secret that only I know of so I turned down my volume when saying that. A person who loves animal is kind, so Minami is no doubt a kind person.

"Listen well, Aki! It seems you misunderstood, but I don't have any interest in orangutans, the one that I actually like is - "

""""Is?""""

Talking about such an important topic such as the person she likes, everyone in the class, including all the classmates who collapsed earlier, focused their attention on Minami.

"".....Chimpanzee!"

Minami boldly confessed in front of everyone's attention.

"I, is that so..... That's.... sorry, for misunderstanding."

"U.... T, that's right.... it's not like I like orangutan you know...."

Furthermore, seeing me shocked by the new truth that just came out, Minami slowly murmured "I can no longer be a bride...." with a crying-like face.

What is it I wonder. Just now I feel like somehow I can understand something coming from Minami.

"Shimada. It's hard to be you too isn't it?"

"Sakamoto.... If you're feeling sorry about my situation, please fix Aki's misunderstanding...."

Misunderstanding? If it's about Minami liking chimpanzees instead of orangutans then I think I already get it though.

"Well, this seat is indeed hot. I guess it's just normal for you guys to plan an escape."

Hideyoshi put his hand on my tea table.

"Now that you mention it, Hideyoshi kept sitting properly, didn't he? You didn't

hear our talk about escaping?"

"No, I did hear it....but my seat is a lot more cooler than yours. I dozed off because of that and missed the timing to participate in the plan."

Even if he says his seat is cooler than ours, to be able to doze off in this heat - Hideyoshi sure is something else. Furthermore, there's also the matter of him not getting found out by Ironman while sleeping. I wonder if his ability to sleep while still looking as if he's awake is also part of his acting ability.

"What's the matter? Did the escape plan become ugly because I didn't participate?"

"No, that's not it. It's just that, as a part of the stupid friends group, it feels lonely when one of us is missing."

It feels hard to invite Himeji-san and Minami for things like this. It's different for good friends and stupid friends though.

"Is that so...."

"? Hideyoshi, why do you look so happy?"

Is it just my imagination I wonder. I can somehow see a smile on Hideyoshi's face.

"Umu. Truth to be told, I'm a little happy to be called a stupid friend. It's because lately you think of me as a girl. I'm a little worried about how you don't care about the part of my appearance that's different from my sister."

The sister Hideyoshi's talking about was his twin older sister Kinoshita Yuuko.

Well, both of them really do look alike, they're both very cute too...

"Hideyoshi also worries too much about weird things don't you?"

"No, taking into account how you treat me lately, I don't think it's weird at all though..."

Seeing me laughing it away, Hideyoshi said this sourly as if he's still not

convinced at all.

Why is he worrying about weird things like that I wonder.

"Because, to not care about things other than appearance, there's no way that could happen right?"

"But, I—"

"Indeed, I do think Hideyoshi is cute, but if it's only that, there's no way we'll be together like this right? To study together, play together, it's because I know a lot about how good Hideyoshi is inside that we're together like this you know."

To choose your friends based just on the appearance, I think that's a very weird thing to do.

"......!?"

"N? What's wrong, Hideyoshi?"

"D, don't look this way"

Saying that, I didn't know why but Hideyoshi turned his back this way as if wanting to hide something.

"Mizuki..... Kinoshita is really cunning, isn't he..... even though he's treated like a woman usually, only at times like this he isn't thought as an opposite sex and gets those kind of words..."

"He really is, isn't he..... My hard work's in vain...."

"Mizuki's still better. My hard work only results in me becoming a high-school girl who loves chimpanzees..."

Himeji-san and Minami seemed to grumble about something with some sighs mixed in while doing that.

"Nmu....? By the way Akihisa, I get the feeling you didn't refute the part about thinking of me as a girl though?"

"Ahaha. Hideyoshi really worries about strange things don't you. It's not like that

kind of thing needs to be answered clearly."

"Why are you avoiding making a statement!? Eei, do you think of me as an opposite sex? Answer clearly with a "yes" or "no"!"

"Youi."[3]

"Mu.... the two answers are mixed in so it becomes unclear - or not!? You, on top of that, you mixed "yes" and "oui", didn't you!? You really think of me as a girl, don't you?!"

"By the way Yuuji. Mutsullini seems to be in a really dangerous situation though."

"You're letting the fact that you just said it doesn't need to be answered slide!?"

Our friend who usually plays with everyone together or with his camera during break time for some reason didn't move even the slightest bit and was only blankly staring today.

"It's because his imagining power can't be compared to normal people. The picture of Ironman and the Brazilian sultrily wrestling must have been freshly burned in his brain from hearing that story mustn't it."

"....That happened without difficulty huh?"

I see. So he became unable to move even an inch because of that.

"Even so, it sure is hot isn't it.... my sweat wouldn't stop since earlier."

"It is.... In this condition there's no way we can put our spirit into studying can we..."

The tatami and tea table equipment looked like something that further added to the sultriness. To be hot during summer is a natural thing, but just as expected this is a little too much....

"What's the matter, Aki. You were quite spirited in studying during the final exam last time, but now you return back to being just like usual?"

"That time was an exception for repelling my sister. In the first place, I don't really like studying."

The result of the test, in the end I was in a fix of my sister returning to Japan. Right now, in order to prepare to move here, she returned for a while to my parents' place, but my freedom was in a precarious situation now.

That's why, I want to fully enjoy my summer break even more, but of all things to have supplementary lesson is really.....

"Besides, there's also another reason in the last test."

Yuuji, who also showed his low study motivation like me, said that.

"Another reason? Was it about the summoned beast's equipment being reset?"

"Un. It's because mine and Yuuji's equipment are extremely weak. We thought we might get a stronger equipment if we get a new one, but...."

"You of all things missed putting the important name field at the test. It will be a Gakuran and Bokutou again won't it."

"Uuu... I wished for at least a metal weapon...."

I don't want a bokutou because I feel like it will be worn out just from clashing with others' weapons....

"Well, with that result Akihisa's weapon might not be changed, but what about Yuuji? Didn't your score go up quite a bit since the last class division test?"

"N? Now that you mention it. I wasn't paying attention to my score or my equipment since I was too caught up in other peoples' scores."

"It's because Yuuji is in the position of giving command right? You assumed that there wouldn't be many instances where you have to fight directly with your enemy didn't you?"

"Aa. Instead of upgrading my equipment, having the others' equipment strengthened will make the battle easier."

That kind of thought just naturally comes to me, so this guy really must have a commander's disposition by nature.

"My final exam's result was quite good too. Perhaps my equipment will become better too."

"Compared to the class division test, I could read the questions better too on the final exam, so mine might get a little stronger too."

It seemed Hideyoshi's and Minami's test results became higher. I'm so jealous.

"I'm sorry.... It seems mine doesn't change that much."

"No no. If Himeji-san's result became even higher it would be too amazing, you know."

Even if there's no limit to the test's score, to get a higher score than that is extremely difficult, isn't it?

"Ah. If that's so let's all summon our summoned beasts once. I'm curious about what everyone's equipment became too."

Perhaps my equipment was also improved. Since the equipment before was the worst, there's no way it would become worse than before, I think.

"You're right. To grasp our fighting potential is an essential need for the test summoning war. Fortunately we also have Ironman here, let's get permission for summoning and check the new equipment right away."

"Right. Excuse me, Nishimura-senseeei."

I called Ironman who's sitting on a pipe chair near the blackboard to look at the class' situation. When I did that, Ironman looked this way with a dubious expression on his face.

"What is it Yoshii? How rare of you to call for me."

Of course it is. I'm not as stupid as to voluntarily talk to someone when it'll add bruises to me proportional to the number of conversations we have.

"Excuse me. I have a request for sensei."

"Request? It's not a strange request, right?"

"No, it's not. We just want to get permission to summon our summoned beasts."

When I said that, Ironman clearly showed an expression that said "troublesome things occurred". I wonder why. Is there some problem or something?

"Aaah... Listen here, Yoshii. You're the Kansatsu Shoubunsha. Your summoned beast has more power than most people, and furthermore, it can touch things and people. To recklessly summon that kind of thing is not something good. Don't think about useless things like that - "

N? His condition is really strange. Even though he'll usually talk about everything clearly, he's really awfully ambiguous now. Is there something he feels guilty about, I wonder.

"Nishimura-kyouyu[4]. It's not like we're planning something bad. We're just purely curious about what our summoned beast's equipment has become."

Hideyoshi interrupted to help. Ironman wouldn't believe me or Yuuji no matter what we say, but he wouldn't be able to ignore if it's Hideyoshi or Himeji-san or Minami who said this.

"No, even so, Kinoshita, to call out a summoned beast besides using it for a summoning war is not something very good, you know."

He said that as if there's something caught in his molar. Just as expected there's really something wrong going on.

"Ironman. What are you hiding to that extent? Is there something inconvenient with our summoned beasts?"

"No, there's nothing going on, Sakamoto. Rather than that, the break will soon end. Return to your seats and prepare for the next class."

To not complain even a word when being called Ironman, this is really a rare sight.

Seeing this situation, not only Yuuji who realized this from the start, even Minami and Himeji-san started to realize there's something wrong with Ironman.

"Nishimura-sensei. Did something happen to our summoned beasts?"

"Our summoned beasts can't touch things so it's okay to summon it right?"

"...Now then. Let's start the lesson."

Ironman ignored both of them and returned to the teaching platform.

"Wait a minute."

Yuuji grabbed his hand.

"What is it Sakamoto?"

"It looks like there really is something going on. I'm not going to ask to give us permission to summon our summoned beast any more then. But, I want an explanation of what's going on - Awaken!"

Reacting to Yuuji's voice, the silver bracelet was activated. This guy's silver bracelet's ability is to create a summoning field. In other words, we could summon our summoned beasts even without permission from the teacher.

"Well then, without further ado - Summon!"

Letting that familiar keyword out from my mouth, a magical array like geometrical patterns appeared in front of my feet. And then, from the center of that, some kind of figure came out gradually. If there's no change in equipment, the one coming out there should be a deformed version of me in a Gakuran and Bokutou, but -

"Huh? My summoned beast somehow looks....?"

"Oi oi.... What extravagant equipment for someone like Akihisa. Is that armour?"

"It even brought a sword. It's completely different from before isn't it?"

"And also, isn't it kinda tall?"

The one appearing was a knight carrying a big sword with body covered in silver armour.

"A, amazing! It somehow looks quite strong!"

"Oh dear.... This thing really looks amazing doesn't it. The summoned beast war is gonna look like a real war isn't it?"

"That's right isn't it. If it's like this, it wouldn't look that much different from real people would it?"

The summoned beast is usually the deformed version of myself, but looks like this time it's different. It's almost as big as my real body.

"The face also looks completely similar to Akihisa-kun doesn't it. Unlike the cuteness up to now, this time it looks quite gallant."

"Eh? I, is that so?"

It's somehow feels a little embarrassing to be called gallant.

"Himeji's quite whimsical aren't you? What's good about this ugly thing?"

"Ouch."

Pakon! Yuuji nudged my summoned beast's head. And then, that nudged head separated from the neck and slowly fell to the tatami due to its weight.

""""....."""

In front of us who became speechless, the summoned beast's head that was separated from the body rolled quietly. That freshly severed head rotated on the tatami many times over and stopped after hitting one of the tea table's feet in a condition with its eyes looking at us.

""Kyaaaaa!?"

"Eeeeh!? W, what is this!? Why did my summoned beast become unable to be showed in the living-room!?"

The body was still standing in a Niou, only the head was moving on the floor.

How do I say this, it looks even more grotesque due to it not being in a deformed form.

"N? Aaah, sorry. I didn't mean to hit it that hard, but I didn't think that it would get detached like that... Wait a moment. I'm going to bring a stapler."

"Yuuji, what are you talking about!? You should be using glue if you want to stick something together!? Because you will make holes and it hurts if you use a stapler!"

"I think that's not the problem though"

Geez.... Did he forget about the fact that I'm a Kansatsu Shoubunsha?

"By the way, even if Akihisa's test result is close to zero, it doesn't have to become unable to battle as soon as it appears does it."

"Eh? Is it because of that?"

During the last final exam, my test score did indeed become zero because I misplaced my name on the test paper, but I wonder if that was really the reason it became like this. Up until now, if the score was zero, we would be unable to summon our summoned beast no matter how much we call it.....

F Class Yoshii Akihisa, Combined Subjects 1503 points

As usual, the score number was displayed a little later after the summon.

Un. It's not too high but there's definitely some score left, so looks like Yuuji's explanation is wrong.

"Akihisa. It looks like your summoned beast's neck getting detached doesn't mean that it becomes unable to battle."

"Un. It sure looks that way."

Just as Hideyoshi said, even if its head has fallen off, my summoned beast was still calmly standing, and when I tried to move its hand, it moved without any

problem at all. That means it became a summoned beast with an attachable head right? Looks like a very vanguard-ish ability..... but if possible, I would prefer a more normal one.

"Himeji-san, Minami. It's okay to open your eyes now. Looks like this isn't a dead body."

I called out to the two girls who firmly closed their eyes. To be frightened by that, just as expected, they really are girls, aren't they?

"Hau.... Even if it's not a dead body, it's still scary...."

"I, I was just surprised you know. It's not like I get frightened by something like th..."

Those two awkwardly averted their gazes away from my summoned beast. The frightened Himeji-san and the pretending Minami brought a smile to my face.

"Now then Ironman. What is this about? You know about this, don't you?"

Yuuji unnaturally turned his gaze away to inquire of Ironman.

Ironman let out a big sigh, and as if giving up, started to explain while clicking his tongue.

"....I also don't know about it much, it seems the summoned beast that you summon now will become a monster of some sort."

"A monster?"

If we're talking about a monster with a detached neck, furthermore with a knight figure to boot....it should be something like a Dullahan, right? But, why did such a thing get summoned?

"Just like you know, the summoned beast system doesn't consist of only scientific technology. There's many coincidences and occult-like elements surrounding it."

"??? That means, what exactly?"

"Ahh...in a word...."

"They failed in adjusting the system."

"Don't say it blankly like that."

Ironman responded with a sour look toward Yuuji's answer. Is that so. I indeed heard that the summoning system's condition wasn't good before, so this is the result of that.

"Looking at Akihisa's summoned beast, it seems the adjustment made the occult part stronger. This is also interesting though."

"I see. It's because if we're talking about occult, we can't help but think about monsters, can we?"

If I see things like this on a road during the night I wouldn't be able to remain standing.

"Even so, why is it Dullahan? If it has to be a monster, there should a lot of Japanese monsters that can be used too, right?"

I wonder if there's any reason to use monsters that are not that familiar in Japan.

"From what I heard from the headmaster, it seems the selected monster is chosen based on the summoner's characteristic and true nature."

Ironman explained while folding his hand.

"Characteristic and true nature? If that's so then the reason Dullahan was chosen for me is because my knightly spirit affected my summoned beast, isn't it?"

"Akihisa, don't turn your eyes away from reality."

"Eh? That's not it? If that's so, the only other reason I can think of is a manly person who looks good in an armour, or maybe a person with the strength to swing around a broadsword?"

"It's probably 'No head = Stupid', isn't it?"

"It came out! The reality that I tried desperately to turn my eyes away from was

said bluntly by Hideyoshi!"

Uuuu... So that's really the reason.... To think that even the test summoning system defines me as stupid....

"Even so, if it's just from looking at it like this, it seems stronger than the summoned beast from before, doesn't it? The weapon is made from metal, and it's wearing armour too."

"T, that's right, isn't it? It looks stronger than before, isn't that right?"

Leaving aside the characteristic and true nature part, getting stronger is something to be happy about.

"I don't think it's stronger though."

Even so, Yuuji said something that dampened the festive mood.

"What is it Yuuji? Is there something unsatisfying about it?"

"That detachable neck is a big problem, isn't it? What do you think will happen if it comes off in the midst of a battle?"

Yuuji pointed at the summoned beast's fallen head.

Ummm, if the neck falls off to the ground during a match,

"....it will get targeted, for sure."

"I think so too."

The head is the weak point when you want to beat up someone. If that weak point falls off and is not protected by the body, of course it will become a target.

"Uuu... So it's like that...."

When you say it like that, indeed you can't say that the summoned beast is stronger now even if the equipment got more or less upgraded. On the contrary, the summoned beast from before was stronger because it could use both of its hands freely.

While we're making a fuss like that, several of our classmates who finally woke up from the nightmare that they got from Ironman approached us.

"Yoshii, seems like you've been doing something interesting for a while, haven't you?"

"Is this a summoned beast? You said something regarding characteristic and true nature, right?"

"I see. So that's why Yoshii's summoned beast doesn't have any head."

I don't want to hear about that from these guys.

"If you want to talk like that then call yours too. Worse summoned beasts than mine will surely come out."

When I said that, the three of them stood in line, the top of their lips distorted, and unpleasant smiles surfaced on their faces.

"Oi oi Yoshii. Are you sure you want to say something like that?"

"There's no way our summoned beast will lose to the one belonging to the number one idiot in Japan such as you, right?"

"It's because no matter how you see it, our characteristics are gentlemanly. There's no way a terrible summoned beast would come out, you know? Watch this-"

""""Summon""""

Reacting to those three's summoning voice, their summoned beasts' figure started to appear one by one.

.....Zuzuzuzu <- Zombie appears

.....Zuzuzuzu <- Zombie appears

.....Zuzuzuzu <- Zombie appears

I see. I guess it's because they're rotten to the core?

"I, it's scary, Akihisa-kun..."

"Y, you lot! Quickly put something filthy like that away!"

Those three guys who got told that their true nature was filthy embraced each other's shoulder and started to cry.

"Even so, this is interesting in its own way, isn't it? What about Hideyoshi's summoned beast?"

"Nmu? Mine? That's right.... When you said about my characteristic, it's acting I guess. Instead of a demon, a mysterious person who's famous on the stage is more appropriate, isn't it? ...Let's see. Summon."

....Pon <- Nekomata comes out.

"Heee~. A cat monster? It sure is cute. It really suits Hideyoshi well."

"It seems that Hideyoshi's characteristic is [cuteness], isn't it?"

"E, in the end even the summoning system treats me like this...."

It seems not everything is scary even if it's a monster. How do I say this, it's soothing...

"Kinoshita lured Aki like that again...!"

"I, I also won't lose"

Minami and Himeji-san made scary faces in proportion to how not scary Hideyoshi's summoned beast was.

"Akihisa-kun, please watch me. I'm going to show you a cute summoned beast too."

"Ah, un. I'm looking forward to it."

"Yes. I'll do my best."

It's the kind Himeji-san. I'm sure it will be something like an angel or a goddess that's going to come out.

"I'm going to do this. Summon..."

....Bon <- Succubus comes out

"Kyaaaa!? A, Akihisa-kun!? Don't look at it!"

"Kupe!?"

The instant I laid my eyes on the summoned beast, my neck was turned 180 degrees by Himeji-san. This is bad. Looks like my real body's neck is going to come off too.

"W, what an amazing summoned beast..... ..... Especially the chest."

"Even though the exposure level isn't that big, but the largeness is extremely

emphasized, isn't it...."

"A, anyway, some outer clothing.....au! it went through.....!"

I was only able to look for an instant because my head got twisted, but I somehow got the feeling that Himeji-san's summoned beast was quite sexy.

"........Akihisa...! This isn't the time to go down....!"

And then, I didn't know since when, Tsuchiya Kouta, who's known as Mutsulini, was desperately taking pictures although his face was dyed with fresh blood, while handing me one spare piece of each photo. No matter how many times you press the shutter button, I think it's useless when the lens is covered by blood though.....

"Himeji. If you want to hide your summoned beast then get away from me. It should naturally disappear if you move away from the field's effective range."

"Ah.... O, okay. I'm going to do that."

Himeji-san nodded her head in response to Yuuji's words, hurriedly moved away from him, and after making sure that her summoned beast had disappeared, she returned right away.

"Uuu.... So awful.... That kind of outfit, that's just so embarassing...."

Himeji-san, who turned red right down to her neck, made a crying-like expression.

"But, even if you say that, that is Himeji's true nature, you know. There's no other way around it, right?"

"M, my true nature.....?"

Himeji-san's face was clouded with uneasiness while looking at us. U..... It's hard to answer that....

"U, ummmmm..... that's.... How do I say this...."

"T, that's right..... It's hard to say, but....."

"It's the big chest, isn't it?"

"Uwaaaannn!"

Just as expected of Yuuji. He calmly said the thing that we had trouble saying.

"T, that's not the case at all! I indeed grew a little fatter, but it's not as major as it would become my characteristic at all!"

"Stop right there, Himeji-san! If you say about that matter further a certain someone will get huh? Suddenly my field of vision seems to have darkened?"

"Aki. If you have something to say let's hear it now."

Minami smilingly pushed my carotid artery.

E, even though I went out of my way to stop the topic out of consideration...

"Leaving aside the outer appearance characteristic, the other characteristic I can think of is [Boldness], I think? After all, it's a succubus."

"B, boldness?"

"Aa. Now that I think about it, I can occasionally see that characteristic in Himeji. When you went home with Akihisa before you also said something like [I'll control myself so that I won't attack Akihisa-kun]."

"Now that you mention it, before, during the opening of school festival, she also pushed down Akihisa, didn't she?"

"Y, you're wrong. T, that was, umm, a desperation measure, or rather, a spur of the moment, anyway, that wasn't it..."

Himeji-san hung her head with a bright red face as if she's really embarrassed. I don't think she should mind about it too much though since there were a lot of circumstances going on at that time like the course of the conversation, or the effect of sake.

Looking at Himeji's situation, a triumphant smile surfaced on Minami's face.

"Fufu. Poor Mizuki. It's because you have that kind of chest that that kind of

summoned beast appeared."

"Uuu.... This is too much..."

"But, on that point, there's nothing for me to worry about. Surely instead of an indecent thing like that, a fairy, a goddess, a war maiden, or something cute like that will come out. Just see - Summon!"

Gogogogo... <- Nurikabe comes out

Not good. If I laugh now I'll be killed!

"...Hey, Aki."

"W, what is it Minami?"

The Minami who spoke while keeping her back facing this way was bizarrely scary. Around the level of the-likes-of-Zombie-and-Dullahan-mean-nothing scary.

"This summoned beast, I wonder if there is something you want to say to me?"

"I, I wonder what?"

While making my words ambiguous, I tried to look around for hel - it's no use! Yuuji and Hideyoshi already averted their gaze away while making a pitying expression.

If it's like this I have to evade the topic to some other characteristic than the perfectly flat part of her body! The only thing I can count on right now is my own brain! Ummm, Nurikabe's characteristic other than perfectly flat is -

"That's right! I'm sure Minami is hard just like a Nurikab... ouch...."

After saying that, I realized something myself.

So that's it.... This question, in the first place, there's no right answer that will

enable me to survive with my life.

"Hee..... So I'm hard. At which part I wonder?"

If that's so, at least let's live till the end with dignity....

"Un... Surely,.... your chest is har... agaa! That's right! Your fist! Your fist is also hard gyaaaa!"

"What do you mean by also! Even though you've never even touched it! Stupid Aki!"

I do touch your fist in real time though!

"Mutsullini, what kind of summoned beast did you get? You haven't checked it yet, right?"

Hideyoshi, it could be to save me, started to talk to Mutsullini who had finished applying treatment to stop the bleeding. It's a little late, but nice follow.

"....Summon"

With a murmur from Mutsullini, nearby, a boy wearing a tuxedo with a bad complexion appeared. It somehow looks cool, but this is...

"I see. Somehow the image of always wanting some blood fits really well, doesn't it."

"There's also a resemblance in the liking-young-women part too."

It really is a vampire, isn't it? It really fits Mutsullini in a sense.

"Since we've come this far, I'm curious about Yuuji's too. How about you summon yours too?"

"N? You're right.... Well then, since I can't call my summoned beast this way, I guess I'll turn off the field and ask for permission from Ironman. Even Ironman won't complain about it now, right?"

Hearing Yuuji's words, Ironman murmured a "yare-yare" and nodded his head.

"Unlike us, Yuuji's personality is aggressive. The one coming out might be a combat-oriented demon."

"Indeed, you have a point there. An ogre who brings a large crowbar, or Jason with a big sturdy chainsaw, or maybe even a god of death possessing a dreadful scythe will come out."

The only image of Yuuji that I have is exactly like an ogre.

"Well then, here I go. .....Summon!"

While listening to our prediction on the equipment, his summoned beast appeared in response to his call.

That thing's equipment was - a trained body, a tightened body, and a body surrounded by muscle.

"It's empty-handed again, isn't it!"

Yuuji's summoned beast appeared confidently bare-fisted. This guy, doesn't he know any other attacking method besides using his fist!?

"Rather than that, didn't Yuuji's summoned beast regress instead!? It's just equipped with a pair of trousers, isn't it!?"

"Furthermore, there's no special characteristic at all. The one that's coming out looks like Yuuji himself, doesn't it. Besides the difference in clothing, it's perfectly similar to Yuuji."

"I, it's a little embarrassing to see, isn't it...."

Himeji-san turned her sight to outside the window. Yuuji's summoned beast only wore trousers on the bottom half while the upper half was stark-naked.

"Yuuji....first of all, quickly call that summoned beast that makes everyone who looks at it become unlucky back."

To say this bluntly, this is nothing other than an opposite of service-shot.

"I got it. This kind of thing, even I don't want to look at it."

"Even so, in the end, what kind of demon is Yuuji's summoned beast? I really can't figure out even the slightest bit from looking at it."

".....Doppelganger maybe?"

Hideyoshi and Mutsullini tilted their head a little. Hm? I wonder if those two don't know what kind of demon this is?

"What are you two talking about? Isn't this a new variety of demon found recently in Japan called [Sakamoto Yuuji]? In the story, it deceives it's pretty childhood friend with it's ugly figure and dirty personality."

"Akihisa. Call out your summon beast."

"N? Well, I have no problem doing that. Summon"

"Aim towards the World Cup! (Gako)"

"Agaa! Yuuji!? You kicked it didn't you!? You treated my summoned beast's head as a soccer ball and kicked it into the trash bin!? What a cruel thing to do!?"

"Don't be so mad, Akihisa. They say it a lot, right? [Your friend is the ball]"

"It's [The ball is your friend]!? It's just bullying when you switch the order like that you know!?"

If the ball has its own will, it will surely cry after being swarmed and kicked by many friends.

"In the first place, I never recognized you as my friend."

"Then don't kick it!"

Even I don't think of this kind of idiot as my friend!

When I was just about to think "Anyway, let's first take the freshly severed head from the trash bin",

"Nmu? Yuuji, your summoned beast's condition is strange, isn't it?"

"O? It really is. What happened to it?"

When we thought that Yuuji's summoned beast's body was starting to tremble, its mouth started to split and hair started to grow on the body with a huge force.

""Kyaaaa!!""

"......A werewolf."

"I see. So that's it."

One of Yuuji's characteristic, that spiky hair, stood up even more, and that face that was full with an air of wildness, turned into the very definition of wildness itself. Is that so. So Yuuji's characteristic is wildness.

"B, but, isn't it strange that it transformed even though there's no full moon right now?"

Maybe because she's afraid of Yuuji's werewolf form, Himeji-san held on my sleeve while asking that.

"Beats me. Maybe it somehow saw some kind of round thing? It's because the legend itself was quite vague in the first place. Something close to that should be reasonable, shouldn't it?"

If you say a round thing.....could it be the head of my summoned beast that was kicked before? The appearance while it spun after getting kicked did indeed resemble something round, but is that really it? It was indeed the result of an adjustment failure, but they really were extremely halfhearted when making it, weren't they?

"By the way, will this summoned beast really be fixed by the time we can do the summoned beast war again? If it's like this, it will become a big demon war when we have an inter-class match, won't it?"

"T, that will be troubling.... The scariness will be troubling, and my summoned beast is really embarrassing too...."

Himeji-san's hand that had been grabbing my sleeves was grabbing it even stronger. To be afraid even in a bright place like this and with this many people

around, I feel a little guilty to the person herself for thinking this, but I somehow think she's a little cute like this.

"I also don't know that much about the summoning system adjustment. The headmistress might know about something regarding this."

Ironman narrowed the gap between his eyebrows. It seems that this situation is something that even the teachers' side dislikes.

"It seems that it will indeed be better to ask the headmistress rather than Ironman regarding this matter, doesn't it? After all, she's the summoning system developer herself."

"That's right, isn't it? Let's ask the headmistress about this."

I stood up together with Yuuji, and headed to the headmistress's room. The summoned beast war is a really important subject for us. There's no way we can leave it alone like this. We really need to confirm it as soon as possible.

[YOU TWO! YOU'RE RUNNING AWAY AMIDST THE CONFUSION AREN'T YOU!]

"Damn it, Yuuji! We've been found out!"

"Run, Akihisa! If we manage to run to the headmistress's room it's our win!"

"Got it!"

"Well, what's going on, headm - hag."

"Please tell us, headm - hag."

"...I wonder why you can't just obediently call me headmistress...."

When we were pressing her for an answer, the headmistress sighed as if she's tired of us.

Damn it. Lately, whether it's Ironman, hag, or Mutsullini, I somehow got used to calling them by their nicknames.

"I'm sorry. Headmistress."

"Han? Do you think I'll tell you if you change your remark, you stinky brats."

"No way!? That's just cruel, head-hag."

"That way of calling is the cruelest one you've ever called me by, you know!?"

Not good. It's strangely mixed in because of the spur of the moment.

"Oi Akihisa. Don't speak rudely to the headmistress who has a reputation as a young person in public (lol)."

"You're also plenty rude yourself, stinky runt."

It looks like the headmistress' mood got even worse than before. This is bad.

"Well, hag. What's the situation actually? Is it getting restored well?"

"Haa? Restored? What are you talking about, you little baldy. You said it as if there's a defect in the summoning system."

The headmistress looked at us as if she's looking at some stupid people. Leaving aside Yuuji, to look at me like that was just unthinkable.

"But, even if you say as if, the adjustment failure can be seen in plain sight, can't it?"

"No, that isn't a failure."

The headmistress shook her head just like a foreigner in a mail order channel.

What does she mean by not a failure?

"That's just a little playfulness."

"Playfulness? What are you talking about?"

I can't see this as anything other than failure no matter where I look at this though.

"It's because it's summer now. Isn't this a season that somehow screams to bring a test of courage on?"

"Ha?"

What is this old woman suddenly talking about?

"In other words, you want to say that you tried to match with the season of test of courage and customized our summoned beast into a monster form specification?"

"That's right. This is a modest present to my cute students who still come to school even though it's summer holiday."

"A present, that's ridiculous..."

Even if that's true, there should be some kind of announcement beforehand. It's really suspicious.

"Nn... is that so? Well, if the hag said that then let's leave it at that."

"E? We're not going to ask what's really going on?"

I'm surprised at Yuuji's unexpected words. I was certain that with his personality he would press further questions toward the headmistress after grasping her weakness.

"It's not like there's any merit for the hag to say "Actually, this is an adjustment failure" right? Let's gratefully make use of the headmistress' kind consideration here."

"Make use?.... You mean, we should really use our summoned beast and do

some kind of courage test just like she said earlier?"

"Aa. The headmistress said that it's the present that she gave with that kind of consideration, right? Since we've reported about the change in the summoned beast, there's no way the academy side who cares about their appearance in public eye will do nothing, is there?"

When Yuuji sent out a gaze, the headmistress nodded with a sigh.

"Yare yare.... Your brain works really fast only on things like this, doesn't it?"

His brain works fast? What does she mean?

"In other words, the academy side doesn't want to admit that not only did they operate an experimental system, they also failed in doing the adjustment. It's good if it is kept hidden, but they can't let it get found out by the students, of all people."

"Aa, I see. That's why they want to make it look like "an incident that we planned since the beginning" by inviting us to do the courage test, right?"

It's tough to get the attention from the world, isn't it....

"Then, since it's like that, it's okay to do the courage test for the remaining two days of the supplementary lesson period, isn't it?"

Yuuji happily inquired of the headmistress. Then this guy, from the start he planned to use the test of courage front to thwart Ironman's sultry supplementary lesson, didn't he? What a good idea to think about. Good job.

"No, if it's just a normal test of courage then I have to reject it. The summoned beast is in the end a tool to raise the will to study. I won't recognize it as something related to a class if you use it only to enjoy its appearance."

Only on that point I wouldn't yield, the headmistress who just said that shook her head.

In other words, it's no good unless we incorporate the using-test-score-as-a-contest's-element part, right?

"If that's so then let's make some kind of check point, and how does some kind of contest there sound? You have no further complaint if it's like that, right?"

"That's right.... It depends on the rules, but it should be okay for me to approve it, I guess."

"Yosh. It's decided then."

Yuuji nodded in a satisfied manner.

With this, we became involved in an unconventional test of courage that used the academy and summoned beast system.

HIDEYOSHI KINOSHITA

The Second Question

Put the correct word into the (_____) below

The Russian writer Dostoyevsky in his novel [The Brothers (_____)] and [(_____) and Punishment] depicts the nihilistic figure of modern person who has lost his piety.

Himeji Mizuki's answer

①[The Brothers (Karamazov)] ② [(Crime) and Punishment]

Teacher's Comment

Correct. Those two titles along with [The Idiot], [The Devils], and [The Adolescent] are masterpieces that are often called Dotoyevsky's 5 great works, so if you're interested, it'll be good for you too if you read those books.

Tsuchiya Kouta's answer

①[The Brothers (Mazo)][5]

Teacher's Comment

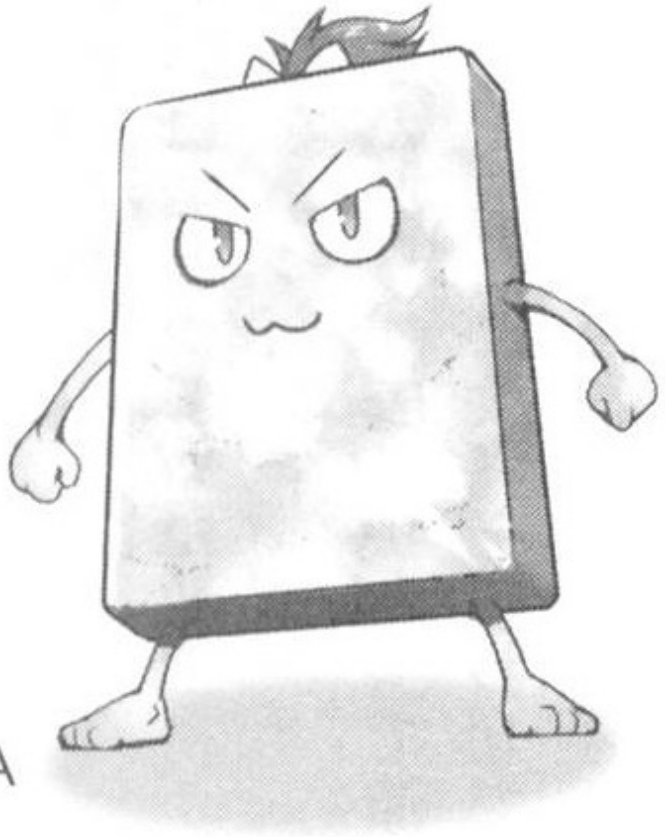
What a part to remember with such a pinpoint accuracy on the correct answer.

Yoshii Akihisa's answer

②[(Whip) and Punishment]

Teacher's Comment

The Mazo Brothers[6] will be happy.



MINAMI SHIMADA

[Oii! Someone please get those nails!]

[We don't have enough black curtains! Take some from the gymnasium!]

[Hey, is it okay if the ornament placed here is just this dried-up well?]

"This sure is another great commotion isn't it?"

"Un. It's because Yuuji seriously made the necessary preparation in order to skip Ironman's supplementary lesson."

The next day, the third floor of the new school building was crowded with people doing remodeling work for the test of courage.

"Even so, I didn't think even class A would help us with this."

The place used for the test of courage was class A's through D's. "Since we're doing this, we should choose the class that can produce coldness" was the reason we suggested this idea, I didn't think we would really get the permission to use the classes.

"Even the students of A class are high-school students of the same age as us. They will feel jaded too if they only keep studying. The final exam is just over too, so this should be a life-saver for them too."

"You're right. There should be almost no high-school student in the world who likes studying more than playing right?"

There are many types of people in this world though so I can't deny the possibility of one existing.

"I-if possible, rather than test of courage, I'd prefer studying...."

The troubled Himeji-san murmured. Even if we say it's playing, since this is a test of courage, for Himeji-san who doesn't like scary things studying is more preferable for her isn't it.

"I-It should be fine Mizuki. In any case, everything is made-up things, and the ghosts are our summoned beasts, there's nothing to be afraid of at all."

"You may be right, but even so, I still hate it..."

I somehow thought that Minami's words sounded more like trying to convince herself rather than Himeji-san.

"Are? Minami also hates things like this right?"

"N-Not at all! , I'm not afraid of these kind of things even a little bit so there's no problem, even if I have to close my eyes!"

No, isn't closing your eyes proof that you're scared....?

"Aki, w-what's with that look! Are you saying that you don't believe what I said?"

"Uuunnnn.... But, I can't see Minami other than being scared since earlier."

"D-Don't kid around with me! There's no way I'm afraid!"

Minami's agitated on the level that she couldn't get even more agitated than this. How interesting. Let's tease her a little.

"Now that you mention it, I heard some rumors."

"W-what rumors?"

"The place that this school is built on.....actually there's a reason why it's chosen for the school."

"W-what do you mean by reason.....?"

Himeji-san, who's at Minami's side, uneasily looked this way.

"Ahaha. Actually, a ghost really does appeaaaarrrrrr!"

"Kyaaaaa!"

This is Himeji-san's voice from being frightened by me.

"Nooooo!"

And this is Minami's voice who also gets frightened.

"Migyaaa!"

By the way, this is my voice whose vertical vertebrae is getting a huge damage due to Minami jumping vigorously on me from getting frightened. I see. Minami's fear is conveyed to me...literally.

"S-sorry, Minami... I was just joking, that's why, could you....please get away...?"

I talked to Minami while smiling in order to calm her. If I don't get released now, my life will be in danger.

"Y-you're lying....! Because, I've been hearing something since earlier...! Something like [I'll curse you, I'll kill you]....!"

Ahaha. Minami seems to be very frightened to the point of hearing an auditory hallucination. Those kind of words, there's nothing like that could be heard from any -

[Yoshii Akihisa....! To be hugged by onee-sama, a detestable male to the utmost....! I'll curse you...! I'll kill you....!]

In the corner of my vision, a ringlet curls haired short girl can be seen. She is Shimizu Miharu-san who belongs to class D. A troublesome person who holds feelings of love toward Minami even though she's also a girl....it seems my situation now is something enviable enough to make her want to curse and kill me.

"A-Akihisa-kun...! I can hear it too....!"

Could it be because she also heard Shimizu-san's voice, Himeji-san looked this way in a frightened state. The surroundings are made to be a little dim too for the purpose of the test of courage , so this might indeed be frightening isn't it.

".....Akihisa."

""Kyaaa!""

Along with Minami and Himeji-san's screaming voice, a crisp sound could be heard from my hip. This sound is probably something that should never come out from your hip bone isn't it?

"I-I was wondering who it was but it's just Tsuchiya-kun isn't it..... Please don't startle us like that....."

"R-really..... Thanks to that, Aki's hip is facing an unnatural position isn't it...."

".....Sorry."

Mutsulinni apologetically answered.

By the way, I always wonder why the one receiving the biggest casualties is always me....

"Well then, Mutsulinni, is there anything you need me to do?"

I inquired of Mutsullini after being released from the hug of death. Being hugged by girls should be something to be happy about, but it's strange that in my case the feeling of fear precedes the happiness.

"....Please move that locker over there."

Mutsulinni pointed at the locker on a corner of class A's classroom. As expected of class A. Whether the lock or the storage space, it's a splendid locker that can't be compared to our class'. If it's that locker, it should be hard to move it using a person's power isn't it.

"....I've already asked for permission."

The World History teacher, Tanaka-sensei's figure could be seen behind Mutsullini. To be able to smoothly get the teacher's permission while doing odd jobs like this really helps a lot.

"Okay. Well then, summon!"

A geometric array was drawn on the floor, and once more my summoned beast's

figure appeared. Unlike the summoned beast up until now, its limbs are long, so it should be more handy when doing this kind of task.

The summoned beast moved with a rustling sound and stood in front of the objective locker.

"I just need to move this locker out of the way right?"

"......(Nod)"

When the summoned beast which had received the instruction put its hand on the locker, its head came off.

""..........!?""

I saw Himeji-san and Minami got their breath taken away. I had to admit that in a dim room like this, the spectacle was a little scary.

"It's really inconvenient to have the head keep coming off isn't it....."

".....How about fixing it in place with some packing tape?"

"Uuunnn.... It's tiresome when I have to stick it again once I let it disappear, and since this will be a test of courage, there'll be no meaning if its head can't come off too..... I guess I'll just leave it as it is."

Leaving the head rolling on the floor, it grabbed the locker firmly using both of its hands. The summoned beast, who possesses power many times more compared to a normal person, lifted up the heavy locker. Now, all that's left is bringing the locker that way - ouch! What happened!? There's suddenly an intense pain on my head!?

"Punishment for hugging onee-sama even though you're just a pig.....redeem yourself by dying....!"

When I took a closer look, my summoned beast's head was being stepped on by Shimizu-san with all she had. What a cruel thing to do!

But even if I say that, since my summoned beast is currently holding a locker , it's hard to retrieve its head. The summoned beast's hands are fully occupied, and

to move my body while controlling it is too hard.

I have to do something, while I thought like that, my friends over there came to help.

"Shimizu! Hand over Yoshii's head!"

"S-Sugawa-kun! And everyone too....! Thank you, you really saved me!"

Sugawa-kun and the guys on class F blocked Shimizu-san's way. I'm really happy. Friends really are something that every person should have.

"Don't stand in my way. This pig needs some punishment."

"Just hand it over!"

"That's right! Hand over Yoshii's head!"

"That's not something that can be entrusted to you!"

Everyone from F class unanimously said this.

""""We'll show you what real teasing looks like!""""

Eh? So that's the reason?

"I understand. If it's like that I'll hand over to you this pig's head."

"Wait a minute! You can't hand it over to them, Shimizu-san!"

"Thanks Shimizu! Well then, let's go everyone! Punishment for the betrayer who gets hugged by girls! Summon!"

""""Summon!""""

The summoning field was flooded with zombies.

"I'm going to pass! Oraa!"

"Agah!"

"Nice pass. Eat this, you jerk....! Doryaa!"

"Fugya"

"Okay! Shooottt!"

"Ugua!"

The Durrahan's head was being used as a soccer ball by the zombies. What kind of drawing of hell this is.

Earlier, it was only Shimizu-san who stepped on the head so it's still better than this, to be attacked by summoned beasts who possess far more power than a person really hurts a lot. Someone....help...

"Stop that. If you're going to bully Yoshii-kun even further, I'll be your opponent instead."

Suddenly, a ray light of hope could be seen over there. That is.... class A's runner up Kubo Toshimitsu-kun!? To lend a help even though he belongs to a different class, what a kind person!

"Thank you Kubo-kun! You saved me!"

"Don't mind it, Yoshii-kun! I'm going to protect you - forever!"

No, just for now is enough though....

"Class A's Kubo-kun...wasn't it? Please don't disturb us."

"I can't do that Shimizu-san, everyone from class F. Even if you gang up on me, I won't budge even a step. Because the thing I want to protect is right here....!"

"Good then! Then I'll bury you together with that pig. - Summon!"

"I'm not going to lose....! The reason for me to study hard up until now, it must be to protect Yoshii-kun during this kind of time - Summon!"

Kubo-kun and Shimizu-san started to summon while glaring at each other. And then, the face of the each of the summoned beast was that of the summoner, but both of their summoned beasts had the exact same equipment. Wearing things

like straw or worn out pieces of clothes, somehow it looks kind of shabby... What kind of monster is that?

"Mutsullini. Do you know what kind of specter that is?"

"....Mayohi-gami."

Not caring about the head of my summoned beast that was still being kicked even now, Hideyoshi and Mutsullini leisurely chat with each other.

"....A god that makes people get lost. According to one theory, it's the soul of people who perish from getting lost searching for companions."

"I see.... So they're people who lost their way as humans and drag in their friends along aren't they..."

By the way, why is Kubo-kun's summoned beast the same as Shimizu-san's? Is there some kind of similar characteristic between them or something?

"Eei! Everyone, engage Kubo Toshimitsu at once!"

""""Oooh!?"

"Come at me anytime you want! I absolutely won't lose!"

Zombie & Mayohi-gami vs Mayohi-gami battle start. The Mayohi-gami started to attack the groups of zombies who were still holding on to the severed head, the zombies also fought back by repeatedly scratching and biting. Spoiled bodies scattered everywhere. Severed heads danced around in the air. Split limbs flew around.

""""Kyaaa!""""

Faced with this kind of gruesome view, from Himeji-san and Minami to everyone else in the class started to raise some screams. The fact that the summoned beasts were ill-advisedly life-sized made it even worse.

[H-hey, don't come this way! Summon!]

[Are you okay, Miho!? Damn it, how dare you frighten my girlfriend....! Summon!]

[Girlfriend...? This guy said girlfriend just now! Traitor!"

[Kill him!]

In just a moment, the sphere of chaos spreaded. Now, the summoning field that centered around the teacher had become a scene of a pandemonium monster battle.

The instant I thought the teacher was going to erase the summoning field due to the rowdiness -

"""YOU GUYS ARE REALLY NOISY!!!"""

Some people that were rarely seen in class 2-F stormed in with a yell. There're some faces that I've seen before... if I remember correctly, those guys are in the third year right....?

"You really are an eyesore aren't you....!"

The crewcut sempai and the Mohawk-haired sempai's faces distorted grouchily when they set their eyes on me. Ummmm, those guys are -

"Perve - pervert--sempai right?"

"Oi!? Just now you were thinking about changing your remark, but upon affirming our faces you changed your mind about changing it didn't you!"

"You thought of us as perverts from the depths of your heart didn't you! It's Tsunemura and Natsugawa! At least remember our names right!"

Aah, that's right. It's the Tokonatsu pair.

"And, Tokonatsu-sempai? What's the matter?"

For the time being, I let the summoned beast put down the locker for a moment and face those two sempais.

"You bastard.... you can't remember our names individually so you put them together like that didn't you!"

"Just expected of that Yoshii Akihisa. His brain's capacity is too small."

What a rude thing to say.

"Rather than that, you guys are really noisy! Are you trying to insinuate us! Huh!"

"We can't concentrate on the summer short course!"

The third years beside the Tokonatsu pair also raised some "That's right!" voices. Could it be that the reason they're seething with anger like this was because they're stressed from studying for the entrance exam? Indeed, this is an

important period for the entrance examinees who are said to be "he who master the summer will master the entrance exam". To have people from the lower floor making Gyaa Gyaa noises like this is something unbearable isn't it? It's no wonder the sempais got mad at us. We should apologize here shouldn't we.

"Sorry. I didn't think the noise would reach the upper fl - "

"Oi, oi, -sempai. Isn't that quite a cruel false accusation you're making there?"

Just when I was about to bow down my head, Yuuji came.

"Eh? Yuuji. What do you mean by false accusation?"

"To create an accusation that is wrong. Or in other words, to find faults."

"I wasn't asking about the word's meaning! On top of that, you really think I'm an idiot don't you!?"

"....Eh....?"

"What's with that [he just realized that now?] kind of face!? The only one who thinks I'm that stupid is definitely only Yuuji!? Everyone else must have - er, wait a minute!? Why are everyone awkwardly averting their eyes!? Look at my eyes!"

"Akihisa. Let's talk about this matter slowly next time. We have something else we have to talk about now, okay?"

Yuuji's consoling-a-child way of talk was really exasperating.

"Well then, umm...what were we talking about again?"

"Whether the third years' complaint is a false accusation or not."

Ah, that's right, whispered Yuuji before turning back toward the sempais and continued to explain.

"I admit we were making some noise, but this is also an accepted way to use the summoned beast for studying. Even the headmistress approved of this."

Indeed, this was also a study event using the summoned beast system. To deny

this event would meant denying not only the summoning war, but even the whole summoning system itself. Since we had the headmistress's seal of approval, there's no reason to deny us from doing this unsparingly.

"Above all, this is the new school building. Unlike the old and worn-out old building, the new school building was built with the consideration of being used for summoning wars. There's no way the uproar on the lower floor would reach the upper floor classrooms with its door closed is there?"

Ah. Now that he mentions it. The school building, even a normal school will at least be made with iron reinforced bars that're inserted into the concrete so the voice from the floor above or below it mostly can't be heard. Moreover, for this building that was built with the uproar of a summoning war as a consideration, there's no way some noise on the level of our uproar will be able to reach them, that is if at least they're taking a lesson inside the classroom.

"In a word, the sempais heard us making some noise while having fun when you're tottering around after getting fed up with studying and are taking it out on us."

After Yuuji said that, the third years sempais awkwardly averted their gazes away. ....I see, they're stung by the truth.

"Well then let us say something too Sakamoto! You are all bringing us a lot of trouble! Making an uproar by involving the whole student body in your grade to peek, and in the end causing every boy in the second year to get suspended didn't you!? What are you going to do if the people's opinion about the school drops and they think of even us third years as stupid!? It will enter our school report record you know!?"

""...""

This time the second year boys, with me and Yuuji at the tip, averted our gazes away. The other party's complaint was also quite right. There's no doubt that that one event had a lot of things to do with Fumizuki Academy's image.

Seeing us like that, Tokonatsu's group elatedly sniffed at us and continued their words.

"In the first place, there's too many of you guys in the second years who have

bad marks. Even the mark of stupidity, Kansatsu Shoubunsha, is only used by you second years, and the one who destroyed the school building during the school festival must have been that stupid pair over there right?"

"Yuuji, you're being called. Go apologize."

"It's about you isn't it, Akihisa."

"It's the both of you, you trash."

""How can that be?""

"How can you two still show such surprised expressions like that!? It's an obvious conclusion if you think about it logically isn't it!?"

To be treated the same way as Yuuji, is a disgrace to the extreme. Enough to demand revocation of said treatment.

"Well, I can understand your point of not being able to stand Akihisa."

"Wait, Yuuji. I don't think pushing all the blame onto me like that is a good thing."

"Miharu also can't stand this pig!"

Shimizu-san, who suddenly came near us, gave me a scornful look. I'm really hated aren't I....

Could it be because he thought Shimizu-san's words as some kind of support towards him, crewcut-sempai talked to Shimizu-san in high spirits.

"Ooh. You're quite sensible aren't you, that drill-hair over there?"

"Don't get carried away and talk to Miharu, you pig-sempai! You stink of cattle!"

The rift between the second years and third years widen even more.

"....How nice, you bastards....! I've been unable to stand you all for a long time!"

Finally the crewcut-sempai snapped with his face completely red with anger. Well, I guess it's just natural isn't it.

"Oi, Natsukawa. There's teacher here too. Stop lashing out."

"I know. ....There's no problem if I do it like this right? Summon!"

The crewcut-sempai who's called Natsukawa called out his summoned beast. And then, from inside the geometrical array, a demon with a big bull horn on its head appeared.

I see. Gozu[7], isn't it? Crewcut-sempai's true nature is the villain's role huh? Seeing that the third years aren't surprised about the appearance of the summoned beast being different from the usual, it seems they've also already been briefed about the change in the summoning system.

"Now then, Yoshii. It's punishment time."

"Kuh...! Just as expected, targeting my summoned beast huh! But, there's no way he'll know which one is my summoned bea - "

"It's this one right!"

"Agah!"

My summoned beast who put down the shelf on the floor was hit by Gozu. The feedback was quite harsh...!

"J-Just as expected of third year class-A even if his personality is rotten.....! To be able to discern my summoned beast in just an instant, I'll admit that you have quite a sharp insight."

"Well, the only one who would possess a stupid summoned beast which has no head could only be you isn't it."

"I'll give you some praise for that sharp insight!"

I raise a big voice to deny the crewcut-sempai's word. I'll pretend I didn't hear the words that will hurt my feelings. This is wisdom needed to survive in this harsh world.

"Yoshii-kun. I'll back you up. I won't comply with the acts of an unreasonable sempai."

"Thank you, Kubo-kun!"

Kubo-kun, who managed to somehow retrieve the Durahan's head since God knows when, came beside me and confronted the Gozu. What a nice person.

"Tsunemura, please support me."

"Okay, I got it. I'll back you up. Summon!"

Seeing our numbers increase, the crewcut(Natsukawa)-sempai asked for support from the soft Mohawk hair, Tsunemura-sempai, behind him without delay.

The summoned beast that comes out was one that was a perfect match to the Gozu, the demon with horse head, Mezu, posing with its spear. I wonder if the reason that their summoned beasts are the pair of demons who watch over the prisoners in hell is because oppressing the weak is those two's true nature. Their personalities seem to be pretty bad.

"Just like Sakamoto said earlier, this is just a mock battle using the summoned beasts so there shouldn't be any problem right? Even this is one of our school's splendid aspects of learning isn't it?"

The crewcut-sempai initiated the first move, probably so as to not let the enemy escape.

A class Tsunemura Yuusaku, World history 174 points

And

A class Natsukawa Shunpei, World history 163 points

The scores that were being displayed were around the average of what class A students usually got. The scores for the Japanese history subject when we faced off during the Summoned Beast exhibition back then were also around this, so the Tsunemura pair's scores for social related subject should be around this shouldn't it?

And then, while waiting for Kubo-kun and me, who are holding our own against

them, to get our scores displayed -

"Where are you looking at, oi. You're quite relaxed aren't you."

"Gah....!"

Suddenly, a shock ran through my shoulder. It seemed like when we're averting our gazes away, the Gozu commenced an attack at Dullahan. Kuh....! What a miss...!

"Does it hurt? It's good.....then!"

Gozu and Mezu were pursuing Dullahan, whose posture was messed up by the earlier attack, by swinging each of their weapons. This is bad. I can't evade it.

"Yoshii-kun!"

Without delay, Kubo-kun's mayohi-gami broke in between us. It blew away crewcut-sempai's Gozu with a body charge. The Mezu who was behind Gozu also got caught in the attack and got blown away together. To be able to put away 2 class A's students with one body blow, Kubo-kun's power certainly is the real deal.

"Wha....! This guy is quite good.....!"

"That Yoshii-guy too. How could that one attack earlier barely had any effect on him....?"

Tokonatsu pair shuddered. They must be surprised by our summoned beasts' power which were stronger than expected.

They might be able to call us trash or stupid, but they'd be in trouble if they underestimated us.

"Please don't take us lightly pervert-sempais. Even we won't stay as idiots forever you know."

A smirk surfaced at the corner of my lips while telling the two sempais that.

Could it be from being provoked by my confident attitude, everyone turned their

attention toward our late-to-be-shown scores.

A class, Kubou Toshimitsu, World history 357 points

And

334 class Alexander The Great, World history 161 points

""....."""

"Well then, the real fight begins now! I'll show you my true power - "

"....oi kora. Wait a minute, that idiot over there."

"....Is there something wrong?"

"I can't see anything but wrong things....."

The soft Mohawk-sempai put his hand on his head and looked amazed. E-even though I finally looked cool and was starting to get pumped up....!

Before I managed to open my mouth to say an excuse, the crewcut-sempai raised his angry voice first.

"Who's Alexander the Great, oi! Furthermore, to be in class 334, you expanded the school too much didn't you! This is clearly not your score!"

"Y-you're wrong! There was a little miss, but this is truly my score! To miss when writing your name is a mistake that everyone must have done at least once in their life right!"

"Leaving aside forgetting to put down your name, what kind of mistake did you make to write Alexander the Great as your name!?"

"T-that was, um, well...."

This is bad. No matter how I explain this, I get the feeling I will still be thought of as an idiot.

[Hey, look at that. So the second years are really full of idiots, aren't they?]

[Y-you're wrong! Even among the second years, Yoshii is an idiot that can surpass everyone in their year!]

[That's right! Also, next year, Yoshii will be in the second year once again so we'll have nothing to do with him anymore during that time!]

What a cruel thing to say.

"Oi, Natsukawa. Lately, the summoned beast system's condition seems to be strange. The name change could also be the result of that couldn't it."

"N? Now that you mention it, there's no way it'll be like this if it's not because of that isn't it?"

"....."

It's hard to say the truth when they say it like that.

"Well, even if the name part is a little inconvenience caused by the system acting up, the fact that you guys are a disgrace to this school doesn't change - "

"I can't ignore that "system acting up" remark."

An unhappy voice could be heard interrupting crewcut-sempai's vehement argument.

"Ah. principal."

"Really.... To have the system blamed because of Yoshii's stupidity is not something that I can casually let go. This is genuinely this brat's miss."

Just like what she explained the day before, the headmistress had a reason why she couldn't let anyone know about the system's adjustment failure. There's no way she's gonna not deny when the system is being claimed of acting up isn't she?

"But, it feels quite irritating to be thought that something like this is our miss isn't it? Maybe I should at least correct that name part only."

A kind suggestion to help that's very unlike the usual headmistress. If possible, I wished she would do that kind of treatment before the result got conveyed to nee-san.... but I guess that's too much to wish for isn't it. No matter how you look at it, it's unmistakably my miss after all.

"And then, why are you coming this far just to visit us, headmistress? Is there anything you need from us?"

"Aa. There's a little thing I need to convey to the second year students. Is Sakamoto here?"

"N? What is it, old hag?"

Yuuji, who had been watching the summoned beast battle from afar with a smirk in his face, came forward to approach the headmistress.

"The academy side is supporting this test of courage event aren't we. We'll also be providing a large establishment for the place and the teachers needed for summoning. Do this with a bang."

"This is quite a generous offer isn't it? What's your target?"

"As an exchange, please leave everything that you make as it is. I'm thinking of exhibiting it to the public around the o-bon break."

"A ruse to up the school's image isn't it. How moving."

"It's because our reputation keeps going down because of you lot. It's tiring for us too."

An assistance for the purpose of propaganda isn't it. The headmistress sure has it tough too on a lot of things.

"In the first place, this change in the summoned beast is for that purpose."

The headmistress stressed that point to push the idea onto everyone. If we don't leave the topic as it is now, the courage test will get suspended so let's keep our

mouths shut for now.

"And also..... since they've gone to the trouble of preparing this, how about the third years also join this test of courage as well? That should be more useful than quarreling here."

Their interest were caught by the headmistress who said those words, the crewcut-sempai and soft Mohawk-sempai who stood at the very front tip of the group replied while giving a sniff.

"Don't joke around. As if we'll cordially work together with this trash for some kind of test of courage."

"Indeed. It's disgusting."

Although the sempai group who were standing behind those two didn't say any word, their attitudes showed that they had the same intentions as those two sempais.

It seems there's nothing to be done about the huge gap between the second years and the third years.

"If you take that attitude, it makes me want to make you all participate in the event by all possible means..... Yosh, I got it. Tomorrow, the last day for both summer supplementary lessons and short course will be the test of courage."

""Wha.....!""

The Tokonatsu pair looked bewildered about the announcement from the headmistress.

"This is the ending part of the supplementary lesson and summer short course, so every participant of both supplementary lesson and summer short course must attend this event without exception. Is that clear?"

After announcing that, the headmistress gallantly went out of the classroom as if satisfied with this arrangement. Somehow, it's rapidly becoming more troublesome isn't it....

"Yare, yare.... Well, it seems that's the decision so sempai, let's enjoy it together

ok?"

"Shut up! I don't have any intention of doing this together with you guys!"

"Is that so? I also can't stand you all. ....So then, how about this?"

"Aa?"

"We'll divide between the side who does the frightening and the side that is being frightened. And we'll just randomly decide the punishment game too."

"You mean we divide between the second years and third years right?"

"Yes. That way, we don't need to get along with each other right?"

We'll be going at each other, so indeed there's no need for us to get along with each other. But there's a possibility the gap between us will deepen even more though.

"Not bad. Of course, we third years will be on the side of doing the frightening okay? After all, we need to chastise you guys."

Their motive is to laugh after succeeding in making other people frightened isn't it? What a twisted way of thinking. But, Yuuji also has the same kind of trait, so I don't think he'll hand over the frightening ro -

"Aa. I don't mind with that."

"Eh?"

That's a little unexpected isn't it. I wonder what his intention is. Since Yuuji's objective was escaping the supplementary lesson, I wonder if he doesn't care about this test of courage at all.

"It's decided then. .....What about the rule and the punishment to the losing side?"

"This was the rule that we first planned to use. Speak if you have any complaints."

Saying that, the thing that Yuuji brought out was a print-out on an A4 sized

paper. It seemed that the reason I didn't see him during the preparation was because he was making the rule list.

I also took a sheet of the print-out from Yuuji and directed my eye on it.

Uuum. Let's see, the rules are -

1. One group must consists of 2 people. Passing through the checkpoint alone will not be allowed

*Note : Being alone does not mean automatic elimination

2. When either one of the people in the group screams, both people will be eliminated.

3. There will be 1 check point for each class from A to D. In total, there will be 4 check points.

4. At each check point, a summoned beast battle will be waged against two representatives from each class guarding the place(the representatives doesn't have to be each class' head). Passing the checkpoint will be done by crushing the two representatives.

5. If there's one group who manages to pass through all the check points, the frightened side will win, if there're no groups who manage to pass all the check points, the frightening side will win.

6. Normal students who're not check point guardians from the frightening side will not be allowed to battle using their summoned beasts. They're only allowed to scare people.

7. There will be only one teacher stationed in each class for the purpose of summoning.

8. The frightened side will carry a camera as a proof of clearing a check point.

"Heee. The rules seem pretty elaborate don't they? It seems fun."

"I also planned to add a rule that forbids breaking the equipment to this list

because the headmistress seems pretty fussy."

I see. It's going to be exhibited to the public so it will be bad if the props get broken won't it.

"Sakamoto, how will we define what's considered to be the scream mentioned in this rule?"

The soft Mohawk-sempai asked Yuuji while looking at the printout.

Indeed, a scream can be pretty vague. If it's only between friends, it shouldn't matter that much if we treat it as some kind of game, but if it's for the match between second years and third years it's a different matter. If it's not defined clearly, it would surely become a source of dispute later.

"N? That part huh? You're right.... I guess we'll need to make a measurement for the volume of the sound. Since we already brought a camera, how about we make it so that once the volume passes a certain threshold, the group will be disqualified?"

"Can you do that?"

"....No problem."

If it's about cameras, then it must be Mutsullini. If it's for his secret intentions, there's nothing impossible with that skill of his.

"How will we decide the subject for the checkpoint battle?"

"About that, how does each of us picking one subject sound?"

"One? Shouldn't each of us pick two instead?"

"Aa. It's because I've already talked to the science and modern Japanese teachers. If it's those two subjects that are often picked for exams there shouldn't be that much advantage or disadvantage right?"

Because it's class A through D, the number of checkpoints would be four in total. Between those four, modern Japanese and science has already been decided to be the subject in two of the checkpoints, and the rest will be decided by each of us

won't it?

"Yo, Sakamoto. Rather than that, hurry up and tell us the punishment for the losing side."

A disgusting smile surfaced on crewcut-sempai's face when he said that. That face was a no matter what he's gonna entrap us kind of expression.

"That's right. How does the losing side will have to do the clean up duty of the winning side during the athletic festival in second semester sound?"

The athletic festival was scheduled in the second semester. That festival is quite a large scale event so both the preparation and clean up will be a handful. If it's possible it's better to skip it, is a thought that everyone holds - even so....

"Oi oi Sakamoto. Isn't that idea too lenient coming from you? Could it be that you don't have the confidence to win at all?"

Just like what crewcut-sempai said, coming from Yuuji, something like this is too simple for a punishment.

"It's because the matter about the match against you guys itself hasn't been told to everyone. If it's only this much, it should be appropriate as a punishment that we decide selfishly on our own isn't it? For both you and us."

Even if the headmistress already put her stamp on this, it should be difficult to selfishly decide on a cruel punishment without discussing it with everyone else. Indeed, just like Yuuji said, cleaning up duty should be an appropriate punishment isn't it?

"...Keh"

"There's no need to be that impatient, sempai. If you want to battle with us you only need to be at the checkpoint don't you? If you do that, me and Akihisa will fight you personally."

Eh? Why me too?

"Direct confrontation at the checkpoint huh...? Interesting. I'm in!"

"Well then, the match will be tomorrow. Let's enjoy this, right sempai?"

"I'll make you trash realize the dreadfulness of seniors."

Just like this, before we realized, the test of courage had become a big scale event that involved the third years.

Even so, to have the role of frightening which has the tiresome preparation work pushed to them without realizing, college entrance exams preparation really build up your stress doesn't it....?

The Third Question

Please answer the following question

Explain about The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Himeji Mizuki's answer

It's the meeting sponsored by the United Nations in 1992 at Rio de Janeiro. It's a discussion attended by each country's head and was also called the Earth Summit. Following this meeting, The Declaration of Forest Principle such as Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 was agreed.

Teacher's Comment

You're right. It's one of the important meetings held where each country present enthusiastically discusses making efforts for earth's environment. Other than two of the names that Himeji-san gave in your answer, it's also called the Rio Cummit. It will be nice if you also remember it.

Tsuchiya Kouta's answer

It's hard to explain in a single word.

Teacher's Comment

I understand. I'll hear your answer thoroughly later in the staff room.

Yoshii Akihisa's answer

[
· Being concerned about the environment, no ink is being used for the question's answer]

Teacher's Comment

Rather than the environment, let us think about whether you can graduate or not.

KOUTA TSUCHIYA

"Uwaah... somehow it has become something big hasn't it?"

"You're right... Even the academy side needs to invest quite a bit now that it has become like this...."

The following day, when peeking on class 3F in the new school building that has been turned into haunted house, I was genuinely surprised. Whether it was the dim atmosphere or the construction on the exterior, I didn't think they would make it this elaborate.

"The third year students' side is also quite serious aren't they? Could it be because those guys also want to stop screwing around at least on the last day of the summer short course?"

As expected, even Yuuji raised his voice in amazement as if he didn't think the academy side's support and the third years would go this far building the construction.

"T-they didn't have to work this hard though...."

"T-that's right isn't it? It's too much right?"

Looking at the tournament creating such a perfect atmosphere, Himeji-san and Minami put a file in front of their faces. For people who dislike these kind of scary things, there's nothing worse than seeing this is there?

"Yuuji, we're supposed to meet in the old school building aren't we?"

"Aa. We're supposed to prepare separately, the new school building class 3F for the third years and the old school building class 3F for us. When it's time to start, the first group will start by entering the new school building in order, as per the arrangement we agreed on earlier.

A fireproof shutter is pulled down to cover the corridor connecting the new and old school building, so although the atmosphere is conveyed to us, we can't check the situation over there. Surely, inside there, the Tokonatsu pair and the other third years are licking their lips while preparing to scare us.

".....The preparation of the cameras is also already done."

Mutsullini shows us the big bag he carries with him. It seems there are several cameras stuffed inside and we're supposed to bring those cameras with us when entering. It's to prove we passed through the checkpoints and to prevent us from cheating, and also to prevent the people waiting from getting bored and for several other reasons, it's also going be used as cameras.... Come to think of it, I was pretty surprised that the third years didn't raise any objections. I somehow thought the third years were going to say "the camera will reveal everything beforehand and we can't surprise you anymore so it's rejected!", but they've unexpectedly agreed to our request without any objections. Could it be because they are very confident that they'll succeed?

"Our preparation is getting ready the cameras and monitors and then making the pairing up combinations isn't it?"

"Ah, that's right. We haven't decided on the pairing up have we?"

According to the rules, basically there will be two people to a group. This seems to be an arrangement to keep the test of courage entertaining even if there are people that aren't even scared of things like that. Now that the situation has changed into a match against the third years, to win, in theory we should pair up people who aren't scared of things like this together, but....

Well, for the pair up, since this is a rare chance, let's make boy-girl pairs as much as possible. It should be more lively that way shouldn't it?"

"Eh? Is that okay?"

This was an unexpected proposal from someone who cares about winning like this guy.

"It's okay isn't it. I only wanted to escape from Ironman's extra lesson full course from hell. The third years are also the ones making the preparations for this test of courage. Just taking the preparations and cleaning up for the athletics isn't that big of a problem is it?"

"But, didn't Yuuji and Akihisa already promise the Tokonatsu duo to personally have a match with them?"

"That was just to stir them up back then. Now that we have succeeded in pushing the troublesome construction tasks onto them, there's no problem at all even if we don't take that challenge."

I nodded as if agreeing with his words.

"Then, your real intentions are?"

"As revenge for getting coerced by Shouko to pair up with her, I plan to drag everyone into this."

Un. It's generally just like what I thought.

Well, it doesn't matter. In the first place, making a boy-girl pair is the main principle in a test of courage, and in this kind of event, I will also be happier with a girl instead of a boy. Now all I need to do is to find someone to pair up with, but.... it will be hard won't it?

There're three girls in our class, Himeji-san, Minami, and Hideyoshi.

It's quite a high hurdle, but maybe I should invite Himeji-san? Uuunnn.... Himeji-san is a kind person so she might accept when I invite her, but I wonder if that's okay? Even from my point of view, unlike Yuuji, whether it's the strength to protect others, or giving some sense of security, I'm overwhelmingly lacking in those points. Frankly speaking, I'm unreliable. For Himeji-san who hates ghosts and is already frightened even now, to pair up with me would be too pitiable.

Then, how about asking Minami? She's quite frightened just like Himeji-san, but if it's Minami, I somehow get the feeling that she would be fine even if I'm this unreliable. Furthermore, if it's Minami, it should be more comfortable to be with. That includes the problem of accidental body contact. But, the problem is -

[Kill.... I'm gonna kill any pig who pairs up with onee-sama...]

Shimizu-san who keeps uttering those curses in a small voice from a place that only I can see. If I carelessly say that, my life would probably be exposed to danger in an instant wouldn't it? I'm not that much of an eccentric who would

invite a real thrill for the sake of enjoying a man-made one.

That means, it's Hideyoshi after all isn't it?

"What is it Akihisa? Is there something on my face or something?"

It might be because there are lots of ghosts in the stories for drama plays, but right now it shows no trace of fear at all. Let's ask Hideyoshi here -

[Sugawa-kaichou, we found a heretic proposing to pair up with Kinoshita.]

[Take him away.]

[Ha. In what way should he be cooked?]

[Fingernail full course.]

[Thank you for the order.]

It's no good. It will be hard to open tabs if my nails are completely gone.

If that's so.....Oh well, there's no other way is there?

"Oi, Mutsullini."

"......?"

"For the test of courage, will you go with me?"

"........!?(*shake shake shake*)"

When I called out to Mutsullini like that, he vigorously jumped back. Mu. What's with that reaction?

"A-Akihisa-kun!? Why are you choosing Tsuchiya-kun out of everyone here!?"

"That's right Aki! Leaving aside Kinoshita, you have an interest in Tsuchiya too!?"

"Eh? But, if I invite Yuuji, I will feel bad towards Kirishima-san won't I?"

"Out of the whole bunch here, you don't have any other choice besides me and Mutsullini!?"

"....Akihisa.... even just the feeling is already bothersome..."

"Your line of thought is as unreadable as always..."

It seems they meant not to hurt my feelings in various ways, but those were some cruel words alright.

"Onee-sama! If it's for your pair up during the test of courage, Miharu volunteers herself!"

Perhaps because she was relieved from me inviting Mutsullini, after she hid away the various stationery that she was holding, Shimizu-san jumped towards Minami. If I invited Minami, those various stationeries which are emanating a silver glow would surely be shot towards me wouldn't they? That was close....

"M-Miharu!? Wait a minute!? Sakamoto also said it just now didn't he, that it will be boy-girl pair!? I can't pair up with you you know!"

"No problem! As long as onee-sama has a chest that's as flat as the sea horizon, things such as gender differences, won't exist even if there is one.

If that was me, the instant that remark left my mouth, around 3 or 4 of my ribs would be lost wouldn't they?

"Geez! Let me go, Miharu! I don't have any intention to pair up with you - "

A dangerous smile surfaced on Minami's face, who tried to run away from Shimizu-san, when she looked at my face. This is bad! I've got a premonition of getting caught up, which means getting my whole body pierced by those stationeries that's emitting a silvery glow!

"Please, Mutsullini! Pair up with mugeeehhh!?"

"Sorry about that, Miharu. Actually, I already paired up with Aki. Why don't you try invite me again next time?"

My cervical vertebrae is grasped by Minami. The choices I have right now are, being killed by Minami right now for rejecting her or getting killed later by Shimizu-san for accepting it.

"But, onee-sama! If you're going with that pig - "

"Miharu. You know that I really hate breaking a promise right? Even so, are you still going to say those words?"

When Minami said that, Shimizu-san vexedly bit her lower lip while murmuring.

"....I understand, onee-sama. If it's like that then I will to withdraw from this place."

"Un. Thank you for your understanding, Miharu."

"But, on the slim chance that this pig becomes unable to attend, onee-sama with Miharu - "

"Sorry Miharu. At that time, I plan to have a stomachache."

"Onee-sama is so mean!"

Being told like that by Minami, Shimizu-san ran away while overflowing with tears.

Plan to have a stomachache...., what an original way of refusing something.

"T-that's the situation, so Aki, please take care of me?"

Even if you say please take care of me, it's not like I have any other choice with my vital spot being grabbed....

"But, Minami, is it okay for your partner to be me?"

"Y-you don't have to be so reserved about it. Aki is enough for me you know. You might be a little unreliable, but I'm not afraid of that kind of made-up things at all. Furthermore, it's not like you have any hope of getting any other par - "

"Are you sure it's okay Minami? I'm human you know?"

"....That misunderstanding, I'm absolutely going to clear it today."

[Yoshii Akihisa.....! I'm going to kill you. I'm going to kill you. I'm going to kill you. I'm going to kill kill kill kill kill kill.....!!]

Suddenly out of nowhere, a message from hell can be heard.

When the sun sets today, my life will probably come to an end won't it.

[Wait a minute Shimizu-san. Let's observe the situation first.]

[- You are....A class's Kubou Toshimitsu-kun right? Do you have any business with Miharu?]

[Let's cooperate Shimizu-san. Our interests probably coincide.]

[....It doesn't seem to be a bad proposition even for Miharu.]

What is that? That strange chill on my back. I get the feeling that some grave situation is developing in some unknown place.

"M-Minami-chan's not fair! Even I want to be with Akihisa-kun"

"Uuh....Sorry, Mizuki.... But, if you go together with Aki, you have to expose your summon beast to Aki at the check point you know?"

"Hau...! T-that's.....!"

Himeji-san made a really troubled face. Is that so? If I went with Himeji-san, that kind of embarrassing experience will be forced into my mind won't it? That was close.

"Well, the pairing up problem is more or less decided already so we can just leave the details for later right? What's important is to make the other participants enjoy this."

Pan pan! Yuuji said that while clapping his hands.

"? What's the matter Yuuji? Prioritizing other people is very unlike you."

"It's because we're the ones planning this test of courage. Our enjoyment is low priority. To first entertain everyone is the natural thing to do isn't it?"

"Your real intention is?"

"Since I have to pair up with Shouko, I want to send the others to clear this so that I won't have to participate too."

Un. A plain and simple reason that even I can understand.

"Now then, since we have to decide the order of attack, quit chattering and let's hurry to the assembly place."

"Ah, un. The headquarters is our class F right?"

"Aa. I also prepared class E as a stand-by room though. Just as expected, this number of people won't fit into just class F alone."

The participants are the students of class F who are obligated to attend supplementary classes numbering 50 people, and the volunteers who attended summer short course numbering 100 people. It's more or less half of the students in our school year.

"Mutsullini. How's the monitor preparation going?"

"....No problem. The LCD display from A class has been brought here."

"Yosh. Well then, let's enjoy this reminder-of-summer event comfortably."

"You're right. There's no severe punishment this time too, so let's enjoy this."

"Umu. If it's only on the level of cleaning up after the athletics festival, it's nothing compared to everything that we've experienced up until now."

"I'm actually, not enjoying this very much...."

"A-as for me, well, since I get to make Aki my shield, I guess I can enjoy it a

little bit."

".....I'm looking forward to various good snapshots."

Inside the school building that suddenly becomes lively once again, we walk into the unexpected festivities holding each of our own thoughts.

<Ne, ne.... that nook over there, isn't it suspicious.....?>

<Y-you're right.... It feels like something's gonna come out from there doesn't it?.....>

From the monitor that Mutsullini installed, the voice and image of the B class boy-girl pair that went out first as the vanguard is flowing out. The first place we headed out to is the checkpoint of B class that's in charge with making things. The class has been turned into the street of old Edo era as a motif. Looking at that dim picture that purposely has its light intensity decreased for this event, there's enough thrill in it even for the people that are only looking through the camera.

[W-well then, I'll be going first...]

[Un....]

On the camera, a scene centering on a corner that bends suspiciously is projected. The two people holding the camera carefully proceed to that place while adopting a vigilant air.

"M-Minami-chan.... in that shade, isn't there something over there?"

"I-i-i-it's just your imagination Mizuki. There's nothing projected at all."

Himeji-san and Minami are looking at the monitor from afar with their hands clasped together. If you're that scared, it would be better to just not watch it though, is what I thought, but when thinking that we might also be going there, there's no way they're not watching this is there?

[I'm going...!!]

[Un...!]

The camera is projecting the other side of the corner. Is there something there...?

While looking at it and holding in the fear from anticipation, the camera just projected a road continuing ahead.

"G-Geez. There's nothing at all is there...?"

"Thank God..... We can safely proceed there can't we?"

In the instant Minami and Himeji-san heave a sigh of relief -

[[Gyaaaa....!!]]

""Kyaaa....!!""

From the other side of the camera, a loud scream reverberates. Hearing that, Himeji-san and Minami also raise a scream simultaneously. Even though there's nothing caught in the camera, to get surprised from just a scream, they really don't like scary things at all do they?

".....Fail."

Mutsullini muttered while pointing at the equipment. The digital meter with the word "camera 1" written under it jumped up at once and indicated that the voice level has far exceeded the red fail line mark.

"....???"

By the way, although a girl just like Himeji-san and Minami, Kirishima-san repeatedly alternates her gaze towards the monitor and Himeji-san and the others while tilting her head as if she doesn't understand what they're scared about.

"Uuunn... for the advance squad to get eliminated in the very first corner... the other side is really serious aren't they?"

"Aren't they? Just as expected of the third years."

Preparing 5 sets of cameras, we have several groups entering together with a slight delay between each of them, but even before the second group managed to enter, the first group had suddenly already lost consciousness. This is beyond our expectations.

"If it's like this we won't find out what's going on in that first corner right?"

"If it's only this much information, the other guys will needlessly become too alert instead and generate even more fear won't they?"

The only girl in the F class who is able to resist ghost stories, Hideyoshi, nods her head in agreement.

"....The second group has already started."

Mutsulini points his finger at the monitor with a number "2" written below it. In it, the figure of a class A's boy-girl pair advancing is being projected.

"It will be nice if this time what the other side is doing can be clearly projected won't it?"

"You're right.."

This is a contest after all, also for the frightened Himeji-san and Minami, some information will really help. I'm not expecting them to clear the whole way until B class, but at least some information about what will come out will really help.

"No, that will be hard won't it?"

"Eh? Yuuji, what do you mean by - "

When I tried to confirm what he meant since his manner of speaking indicated that he knew something,

<<Hyaaa-!?>>

""Kyaaa-!!""

Right after commencing, a scream can be heard again from the other side of the camera.

".....Fail"

This time a little bit different from earlier, it's at the place where the corner started to enter your field of vision. To come at us by changing the place, the other side is quite good.

<A-a blood-stained head suddenly appeared through the wall...>

<To have theKuchisake-onna appear suddenly from behind....>

That kind of murmur can be heard. So the reason it doesn't appear on the camera is because it's suddenly in the blind spot isn't it. This time, the summoned beast's size is large, unlike how it usually is. The bloody head and Kuchisake-onna is also in their real size, so it must have been quite scary.

"Nee, Yuuji. What did you mean when you said that it will be hard earlier?"

Beside me, Hideyoshi is asking Yuuji. That's also something I'm curious about.

"...I don't think we're the only ones using cameras."

Kirishima-san answered before Yuuji managed to do so. That means....

"The third years are also looking at this footage?"

"Of course they are. Without that, it would be too advantageous letting only us use a camera. Since they're not protesting, that means the other side also gets a merit from this."

"Is that so? I thought it was because they were too confident in their abilities or

something."

And also, for the frightening side to enjoy in the interval while they wait for us to come.

"Well, that's also part of it too..... But if they look at the footage from the camera, they can find out roughly where can our side focuses our attention on. For the frightening side, it will be easier to find the timing, and it will be easy for them to attack us from our blind side too."

"Ah, is that so."

If it's just to confirm our location, there're a lot of other ways, but if it's to find out where our attention is directed at, then looking at the camera is definitely the way to go.

"Furthermore, the other people's summoned beast beside yours can't touch objects so they can slip through obstacles to do a sudden attack. If they also know the opponent's position and viewing directions, then it will be possible to do things like placing a monster behind them too."

"I see. So even without any fixed cameras, we actually revealed information to them ourselves. That certainly makes it easier for the other side doesn't it?"

"...If it's just a test of courage using summoned beasts that is."

On the monitor, the third group challenging the test of courage is being projected, but this time they also failed without managing to reach the check point. Looking at the condition from the first group of class B people, I'm concerned about where this battle is heading.

"Even if I say that, although there's no pressure for us to win this, a match is still a match. I just can't take it if we're one-sidedly losing."

Fun, Yuuji snort. Un un. For this guy who hates losing, this is a very Yuuji-like way of thinking.

"I was thinking of checking out the situation first, but this is already past the limit isn't it. If there're too many people with high scores getting failed here, it will be hard at the check-point."

"That's right isn't it. The other side also put people with good scores at the check point didn't they?"

The number of people doing summoned beast battles from the opponent side is divided into 4 groups consisting of 8 people. If it's just this number of people, they will fill the roster with names from A class for sure. If we don't send people with high test scores to face them in return, there's a possibility that we will get wiped out at the check point.

"Well then, I guess we'll have to start to make a move too. Everyone! Change of order! Sugawa and Fukumura pair from F class and Asakura and Udou pair from the same class will go in first!"

Yuuji raised his voice to give directions while still seated in his chair, and after a little while, the face of the familiar F class member is projected on both camera 4 and 5.

(We're going in!)

(I'll hold the camera.)

In order to delay the time of breaking in, the Asakura and Udou pair was asked to be on stand-by while the Sugawa and Fukumura pair advanced first while bringing a camera. I don't know whether it's because they have guts or because they're not thinking at all, both of them are closing in on the aforementioned corner without even a slightest hint of hesitation.

"Ah, if it's done with an attitude as if nothing will happen, it's less scary than before and it helps a lot."

"You're right. It's much better like this isn't it?"

Just like what Himeji-san and Minami said, compared to the camera work of people who were on their guard, the camera work of the people who steadily advanced without any tension at all is less scary. Also, if they move rapidly like this, even the frightening side will find it harder to find the right timing.

(Ooh, wasn't it there? The place that something seemed to come out?)

(You're right)

The corner where the three groups before failed in succession is projected by the camera. Both of them turn round the corner while holding the camera and unintentionally shot towards the wall at the side, and then,

""Kyaaaa""

A blood-stained severed neck appeared there. And then, just like that, the camera moved towards their backside.

And there, a gross woman whose mouth is torn up to her ears appeared.

""Kyaaaaaa!!! Kyaaaa!!!""

Himeji-san and Minami raised a scream on the level that makes people wonder how they are able to produce that loud of a scream. No, it's not just Himeji-san and Minami. Some of the rest watching the monitor at other places screamed too. Indeed, it might be scary for those who aren't used to things like this.

But,

(Ooh, this person, her mouth is a little wide, but isn't she quite a beauty?)

(No no. This person here should be more beautiful isn't she? We won't know whether her body is sexy or not since there's nothing below her neck, but if the blood is washed she should be very pretty.)

Sugawa-kun and Fukumura-kun are coolly evaluating their opponent.

"H-how can those two be that calm about it!? Aki and the others too!? Aren't you afraid!? It's such a real looking ghost you know!?"

Minami shouts with a pale face. Well, even if you put it like that...

"Because it's not like our lives are in danger, I guess."

"It's because such grotesque things like that are things F class sees every day."

"...That much, is nothing compared to the punishment on Akihisa when he nearly gets killed by everyone."

"You're right. This much is child's play compared to ane-ue's punishment."

It's not like us to be scared of only some bloody things.

(Even so, it's dark here isn't it.... We'll trip into something if it stays like this..)

(Ah, lucky for us then. Let's borrow the light over there.)

A lantern that's used as a decoration is projected in the camera. Sugawa-kun and Fukumura-kun approach the lantern in order to arbitrarily borrow it.

-Bon!

""Kyaaaa!""

Suddenly, a ogre-like face appears on the lantern and weird sized limbs come out from its body. Is that the lantern ghost? I see. They integrated their summoned beasts with the surrounding background huh? It's a very good performance.

(Ooh? I can't grab this.)

(Our summoned beasts should be able to grab this right? Summon!)

Disregarding the other party's thoughtful performance, the zombie summoned by Fukumura-kun grabbed the lantern ghost and started to advance even further. ....I feel sorry for that lantern ghost who noisily flails its limb.

"S-somehow..it such a surreal scene isn't it...."

"T-that's right isn't it.... It's as if we're watching a television show or something."

"....Yuuji. I'm scared so hold my hand."

"Shut up Shouko. You weren't frightened even the slightest bit were you?"

"...I was too frightened that my voice wouldn't come out."

"Liar. You just missed the chance to scream didn't you?"

The frightened Himeji-san and Minami, also Kirishima-san and Yuuji who do the same routine as usual. Unaffected by the situation here, the two zombies advanced forward using the lantern to illuminate the way while scattering their rotten flesh. This is just some random thought, but if this goes well, this could very easily be turned into some kind of simple movie couldn't this?

And just like this, we watch over Sugawa-kun and Fukumura-kun's pleasant advance(?) for a while.

When the time comes, Asakura and Udou starts to break in while bringing camera no. 5.

"Nmu? By the way Yuuji, didn't you say that the pair for this test of courage has to be a boy-girl one?"

Hideyoshi, who takes a peek toward the monitor, asked Yuuji. Just like Hideyoshi said, the one in the monitor, the Sugawa and Fukumura pair, and the one that entered after that, the Asakura and Udou pair, are all boys.

"I wanted to make it more or less like that, but since us F class consists mostly of males, the numbers don't match."

The number of boys and girls in a whole class year is more or less the same, but the distribution in F class is 47 : 2 : 1. The number of boys and girls who voluntarily attend the summer additional lesson is more or less the same, that's why for the test of courage this time, only us F class have a lot of male participants. It can't be helped that not all of them can be formed into boy-girl pairs.

(Aah...! Damn it! Why is someone like me paired with a person like Sugawa...!)

(This is your fault for not being popular isn't it!)

A conversation like that between Sugawa-kun and Fukumura-kun can be heard from camera 4. It looks both parties are not satisfied with being partnered with each other. Even someone like me will also be unsatisfied with having to suffer the plight of being paired with the boys from F class when I'm supposed to enjoy this test of courage with a girl.

The two of them, whose displeasure can be felt even in the darkness of the image, continued their quarrel.

(Whaat.....? Sugawa, haven't you been trying to talk to around 20 girls since this morning and got rejected each time?)

(Y-you're wrong! T-they didn't reject me! It's because of their personal situation! There's no way I'm unpopular!)

(Then I'm the same too! There's no way I'm unpopular! I've only had bad timing up until now!)

Ah. That voice level of that shout just now seems to have passed the red mark on the voice strength meter....

".....Fail"

"What are those two doing..."

The two groups that didn't get surprised by the attractions at all failed because of a stupid argument. Uuunnn.... As expected of class F...

"But, thanks to Sugawa-kun and Fukumura-kun, we found out about the enemy tricks didn't we?"

"Right. There's also the Asakura pair so reaching the check point is only a matter

of time."

Asakura-kun's camera, who entered quite a while after Sugawa-kun's group, has already advanced quite far. There's a lot of attractions such as a long necked monster which suddenly appeared from a well, a one-eyed kozou, and even the more orthodox ones. Some of the groups which entered after them still got scared even though they knew what was coming to greet them, but most of the second year groups managed to break through.

And then, finally the Asakura group's camera took a shot of an open field. In the center of that field, two of the third year students whose faces I vaguely remembered and the science teacher, Fuse-sensei, were already waiting.

(Ooh. Is this the checkpoint? It was quite a breeze wasn't it?)

(It's only walking through class B's long runway though.)

Asakura-kun's group, who broke through (more like passed through though) the incoming enemy's summoned beasts one by one, was quite uplifting. If it's like this, we might be able to clear the class D area too.

((((Summon!!))))

While we watched over them through the monitor, the 4 of them start to call out their summoned beast under Fuse-sensei's permission, and their scores start to appear.

First, the third year's score are shown clearly.

A class, Kondou Yoshifumi, Chemistry 326 points.

And

A class Ootake Kimiko, Chemistry 263 points .

"Just as expected, it's class A people isn't it?"

"Since a lot of the third years attend prep school too, they prepared someone with the most superior test score available huh."

Although there are people with better science scores, but just like us, the other side also don't have full members. Which was why we assumed that people with scores over 400 hundred wouldn't appear this early...., but it seems people with scores over 300 do.

By the way, even for someone placed in A class, on average their scores will surpass at least 200. Because we see Himeji-san and Mutsullini's score quite a lot, our standards became quite weird, but usually even a score of over 200 is a great score you can puff your chest about. In other words, the third years shown in the camera are people who are around the top 10 for science subjects in their years.

And then, the one fighting them, the scores of the people on our side

F class Asakura Masahiro, Chemistry, 59 points

And

F class Udou Sumiyoshi -------

((Gyaaaa!!!))

Aaah!! They got done in before the score was finished being displayed!?

"Well, just as expected wasn't it"

"You're right. The checkpoints are straight out test score battles after all."

Although they have guts, class F students are still class F students after all. There's no way they will win when it comes to a test score battle...

"But, with this we found out the way up till the checkpoint. Now the chance that students from other classes clearing it if we send them in should increase. Everyone! This is the time we settle this! Let's send in a pair who can fight against the enemy pair just now!"

Yuuji calls out to the people who have been on standby up till now.

""""Leave it to us!!!""""

"Your score can't stand up against the enemy at all!!!"

Somehow, the first ones to confidently step up are the guys from F class.

(Yosh! class B conquest completed!)

(We did it, Shinichi-kun!)

Seven pairs break in after Asakura-kun got crushed by the enemy, and among them 5 pairs manage to reach the checkpoint after repeatedly almost letting out screams that would exceed the fail level. There's no replenishment test allowed for the match this time, and there's also no substitution allowed. For us, as the offensive side, even if you can't win the match in one go, we can still clear the challenge by challenging them multiple times to drain their test scores. In short, the key to this match is to send in as many students with high test scores as possible without letting them fail on the way to the checkpoints.

"Haa... I'm glad... With this, we won't have to go to class B right?"

Himeji-san stroked her chest in relieve.

"Un. Since we've already cleared class B."

From the rule that we agreed upon before the game, the offensive side can just skip the class they already broke-through and start from the next class. From the position of the class and the shape of the maze, we have to clear class D after class B.

"I want to pass on this because it's scary....."

"Uuuun... but this is an official notice from the headmistress after all."

Since the class was cancelled, this courage test became a replacement to the class. For students from other classes who attend the summer short course out of their own volition, they can still use some kind of excuse to not participate, but for us class F students, we have an obligation to participate since we're the one that caused the supplementary class cancellation. We can't just withdraw from participating just because we're afraid.

"It will be nice if someone else can clear it all the way in this manner..."

Hanging onto a sliver of hope, Himeji-san's turn is set to be the last one to try. It's so that if someone else manages to clear it all the way to class A, she won't have to do the courage test at all.

"We'll try hard so Himeji-san won't have to take the test. Right, Minami?"

"Y-you're right, Aki. Let's do our best."

Although her face shows a complex expression, Minami seems motivated to do this. It's an expression of fear mixed with a little enjoyment from the event. It seems she doesn't like this kind of things, but I'm happy that she seems to still be able to enjoy this.

Not only Minami and us, everyone else that is participating also seem to be enjoying the event in their own way, from raising a scream while looking through the monitor to writing the enemies' positions on a note. It may be hard for Himeji-san who hates scary things, but I hope she at least enjoys the festival-like atmosphere.

(Well then, we'll continue on toward class D)

(Let's do our best, Shinichi-kun)

On the other side of the camera, the two person who just broke through class B went on towards class D. From this point forward, we still don't know the set up of the enemy. We'll have to be careful.

(Just tell me anytime if you ever get scared, Mami. I'll protect you)

(Un, thank you. I'll be in your care, Shinichi-kun)

""""Tch...!!""""

Toward the conversation of those two which was heard from the monitor, tongue-clicking could be heard all over the classroom. When I look around to see who were the ones who did that, it was from the boys from class B and class C. Of course, that kind of ill-mannered actions couldn't have come from class F students.

"Sakamoto, please let me go next. I'll let them know that their true enemy is among the second years."

"Wait, Kondou. This is surely my, Mutou Keita, also known as "sure and reliable ally-killer's" turn to shine"

"No no, you should leave this to me, Harada Nobutaka, whose catch copy is "Gruesomely repaying kindness with resentment."

Class F's selling point is the power of action. We're not soft enough to let this slide with just a tongue-click.

"Oi oi, you all..... Let's all come down first."

Yuuji shrugs his shoulders as if he's amazed with this.

"- that kind of thing, should be done by everyone in the class."

The ever so magnificent class F. Although we'll let bad things run rampant, we'll never leave someone else's happiness alone. It's this kind of daily activity that builds up our feelings of solidarity isn't it?

"But, now is a bad time for infighting isn't it. Since they managed to go ahead, we need them to do their best to win this game."

"Umu. Since we are doing this, aiming for a win is just natural."

We return our gaze toward the monitor in order to see through the enemy's plan. The stage now, class D, is a lot smaller than the previous stage, class B. The size is only about a third of class B. They probably won't be able to do any tricks on a larger scale than the ones they did in class D, so I think we should be able to clear this one more easily -

(Kyaaa!)

(Eh!? What's wrong, Mami? What did you see!?)

(T-there's something slimy touching the back of my neck...!?)

Just as I was thinking about that, a scream can be heard from the monitor. What happened!?

"....Failure"

The sound level went past the failure level. The scream just now belonged only to the girl, but in this case, the rules state that both participants are considered disqualified. That means their happy advance ends here.

"Ne, Yuuji. Just now, did you see what happened?"

"No. There's nothing captured on the camera."

In class D, instead of choosing to go with the street-looks motive, the class is just dark, with a lot of messy ornaments scattered about. If it's like this, it will be hard even for the participants to know what's going on won't it.

(Ukyaa!)

(Oi! What's wrong!)

The second group that entered after that, which was somehow able to advance without getting afraid of the ghosts which kept appearing repeatedly, was also disqualified along the way.

I wonder what happened. This time, unlike what happened up until this point, the other side's summon beasts were perfectly captured by the camera. That means, this time the summoned beasts are the decoy, and the real things are....

"....It's probably, direct contact."

"I think so too."

Just like what Mutsullini said, they probably surprised the participants by touching them with something from their blind spot. The slimy thing earlier was probably konyaku or some kind of other standard thing wasn't it.

(Owaaa!? S-snake!?)

(F-frogs!? There are frogs raining down!?)

Group three who continued after them also failed. So it's reptile toys this time. Whether the form or the touch sensation, it's good enough material to draw out screams in a darkness like this.

"Damn. So the other side is not that stupid. They managed to change their tactic pretty well."

"Changed their tactic? You mean their tactic to frighten people?"

"Yes. They changed from an intensity tactic to a touch sensation tactic. In class B, they only stimulated our sight. It's no wonder we can't keep up when they changed it to stimulate the other senses."

"I see. So that means the other side also used their head."

Until now, no matter how scary they were, in the end the ones appearing before us were just normal summoned beasts. They can't touch us directly. Besides, since the path is wide, it's good enough for us to only watch out for something that will surprises us by sight. But this time, they mixed it up with direct touch. The people who are going to go in from now on are also already imprinted with "fear from something that can be seen" from looking through the monitor . They won't be able to cope well with "fear from something that can be felt" which can't be conveyed from the monitor will they?

"Then, it's also time for us to strike back. Class F second group, prepare to sortie!"

""""Ou!""""

Replies full of energy can be heard. The second group from class F consists of 4 pairs, or in other words, 8 people. Will they be able to proceed smoothly?

(Oi, based on what Sakamoto and those who failed said, it seems like we'll be touched by something unknown during this course.)

(Is that so? Isn't this worse than B class just now?)

(Yeah)

The first group from F class' second squad is warily looking around as they talk. Even if they were already used to bloody incidents, everyone probably has reservations when going through such a strategy. However, our F class looks a

lot more reliable than those from the other classes.

(So actually, I already thought of a good countermeasure.)

(Countermeasure? You have a good idea?)

(That's right! This is my secret move! Listen up, when something touches us, we scream most of the time because we think of this unknown thing that touches as something disgusting, right)

(Un, you're right.)

(So during this moment, we just turn the feelings of fear in our mind into 'this pretty girl likes me and wants to hold hands with me, but she feels shy and can only use something else to touch me! The scary feeling will immediately become a delightful one.)

(Wha, what did you say…this thinking is brilliant! Muto, that terrifying brain of yours really surprises me!)

(Heh, don't praise me.)

"Oi, Yuuji, don't those two know that their conversation can be heard by us through the monitor?"

"Who knows? They have brains that are terrifying anyway."

"They're scary alright…"

Because of this conversation, our F class' rating will likely drop further.

We continue staring at their actions on the monitor for the next few minutes. Suddenly, it seems like the camera seemed to capture something that went by as they turned around the corner. Is that…a jelly?

Pitak. That thing that flits through the air sticks onto the two people walking by.

((OHHHHH!! CAN’T STAND THIS!!!))

The idiot pair turned the horrifying feeling into a delightful one, and fell into the beautiful illusion they created.

“…Fail.”

“Akihisa, go deal with those two later.”

“Got it.”

How unfortunate that I have to do such cruel things to my classmates again.

“Th, this classroom doesn’t look that scary. That’s great…”

“Yeah. Maybe we can safely get through this.”

Even though they say so, these two girls are rather cute for inadvertently trembling whenever they hear the screams coming from the monitor.

“Yuuji, leaving aside those two idiots, the other three groups look like they’re proceeding well.”

“Yeah, that’s because those guys from our class aren’t so mentally weak as to scream once they suddenly feel something touching them.”

Even if they scream, it’s not like it will be so loud it will exceed the limit, so we don’t have to worry yet.

“I’d say, those guys should be taking action soon.”

“Yeah. The enemy knows our movements, and they’ll probably try some other methods of dealing with us.”

Both sides are using the cameras' footage to grasp the current situation, and obviously they can react accordingly. If the opponent’s plan is effective, we have to think of a way to reverse the situation. On the other hand, if our invasion is successful, the 3rd year seniors have to think of other ways to mess around with us.

“I wonder what kind of move they will come up with to deal with us?”

“Who knows. I didn’t see an—nn?”

Yuuji stops talking as he suddenly turns to the front and stares at the monitor.

“Ah, the atmosphere now doesn’t feel the same, does it?”

“I’d feel the same too. It’s pitch dark, and I can’t see clearly, but it looks like they entered a wider area.”

Hideyoshi’s right. Camera 2 is showing a dim yet open space.

“But it doesn’t look like there’s anything there.”

“Mu, it does look like a wide space. And it also looks like there is a lighting equipment right on top of the center area or something.”

Everyone gathers their concentration as they stare at the image shown on the monitor. We can see things like cables on the ceiling, and that should be a spotlight. As expected of Hideyoshi to know what it is just by seeing a few cables.

(It doesn’t look right.)

(Yeah. I don’t know what kind of situation it is, but I feel that this isn’t good…)

We can feel the duo at the scene swallow their saliva tensely through the monitor. Even if our F class members are retarded in terms of delicate senses, but they will have proper reactions when there is a need. I suppose this is an important moment, a showdown with the 3rd years.

“…Someone’s here.”

Muttsurini mutters.

On the image, a shadow is silently standing in the middle of the darkness. Is that a trap set by the opponent? No, it may just be a decoy. Maybe they’re

deliberately forcing us to focus on that empty space and then deal us a fatal blow unsuspectingly from the back. This isn’t impossible.

(It’s useless to stand around. Let’s go.)

(Got it.)

The duo continue on, and the camera follows their footsteps as they slowly show the shadow in the dim corner.

3 steps before the duo reach the center of the wide space, the pitch-dark image on the monitor shows a radically different change.

PAN! The lighting source is switched on with a sound that echoes through the classroom.

A sudden flash of light appears in the middle of the pitch-dark image, and the baldy of the Toko-Natsu pair, Natsukawa-sempai is basked under the light, silently standing there.

—And wearing a golita costume with laces all over it.

““““GGYYYYAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHH

Everyone, either within or outside the monitor, lets out agonizing screams of despair from the bottom of their hearts. Of course, I couldn’t help but tremble after seeing this most devastatingly terrifying image I’ve seen in my life, and couldn’t control my scream.

“THAT DAMNED BALDY! COMING UP WITH SUCH A MOVE!”

“THAT’S TOO DISGUSTING! THEIR METHODS AND EVEN THAT IMAGE ON THE MONITOR IS DISGUSTING!!”

“KYAAAHH!! THERE’S A MONSTER! NO, IT’S SCARIER THAN A MONSTER EVEN IF IT’S NOT!”

“Uuuu…! I’ll have nightmares…! I definitely won’t be able to sleep tonight…!”

“…Very disgusting.”

“EVEN I’D SAY THAT I CAN’T STAND IT AFTER SEEING SUCH A THING…!”

Even everyone from F class and Kirishima-san are inadvertently crying out after seeing this unexpected and overly disgusting image, and those with lower tolerance might fall unconscious or start puking. Those 3rd year guys actually came up with such a dangerous attack!

(What? I think there’s a voice coming from there?)

(Yeah, I heard it too. The cries over there—GYYYAAAAHHHHHH!!!)

Damn it! The second unit has been eliminated too! The screams are becoming more frequent! This will be bad if this keeps up!

“Damn…! Even so, we can’t save those guys who’re deep inside the enemy’s

base…!”

“What!? You mean that we can only watch them head to their deaths!?”

(GYYYAAAHHHH!!! SOMEONE SAVE ME!!!)

(NO! NO NO NO!! PLEASE LET ME GET AWAY FROM HERE!!)

(SOMEONE SAVE ME!! IF NOT, THEN AT LEAST KILL ME!!!)

(@&^!#$*^&%$^#^#*$^##$@%$#%&&)

“…Our intrusion squads…have all fallen!”

“Damn it! Our good brothers have all…”

The forces that were just sent in were all annihilated.

We already took damage physically and emotionally just by seeing the image through the camera, so those good buddies of ours who actually witnessed that kind of horror will most likely be unable to return back to society…damn you, baldy-senpai! Doing such an inhumane thing!

“Sakamoto! Revenge…WE MUST ENACT JUSTICE FOR THOSE GUYS’ SAKE!”

“IF WE LOSE LIKE THIS, WE’LL BE SORRY TO THOSE WHO BRAVELY SACRIFICED THEMSELVES!!”

Our classmates are all complaining with tears in their eyes. My heart feels similar to them. No matter what anyone says, anyone will feel compassionate after seeing those guys who suffered the disaster die in such a way…

“Of course I know! Since those 3rd years are going to play this way, we have to fight it hard with those bastards! All those who were to enter, back down! I’m sending the pair of Muttsurini and Kudou Aiko!”

“““OOHHHHH!!!”””

On hearing those two’s names, the entire classroom is instantly drowned in manly roars. If it’s Muttsurini and Kudou-san going, we’ll definitely have a way to break through this danger!

“““MUTTSURINI! MUTTSURINI!”””

“““KUDOU! KUDOU!”””

Amidst the calls of ‘Kudou and Muttsurini’, Kudou Aiko-san, who was named, doesn’t look tense at all as she calmly walks towards Muttsurini and says casually.

“That’s how it is. Please take care of me well later, Muttsurini-kun.”

“…(Nods)”

Muttsurini, who nods silently, doesn’t show a single bit of panic on his face as well. This guy is definitely not normal to be able to remain calm after seeing such a gross image.

“I’ll leave things to you two. No matter what, you have to break through that damned baldy and take down D class!”

Yuuji stares right into Muttsurini and Kudou-san’s eyes as he says this.

Based on the size of the classroom, once we break through the baldy-sempai ‘s area, we’ll just have to clear the checkpoint. It seems that the teacher in charge of D classroom is a health education teacher, and if these two are going, it’s not impossible to take down D class. I hope Muttsurini and Kudou-san can give their all in fighting the 3rd years no matter what in order to prevent everyone else from becoming innocent martyrs like those buddies of ours just now.

“Un~ I can’t give you any guarantees, but I’ll definitely do my best, Sakamoto-kun.”

Kudou-san’s tone remains as carefree as ever as she answers Yuuji simply like this.

“Ahh. I’ll leave things to you. You too, Muttsurini. You’re okay, right?”

“…No problems.”

Muttsurini nods slightly.

“…I’ll teach that baldy, what true terror is.”

“Everyone! That scary image will immediately appear again! All girls are to hurry up and close their eyes!”

The camera Muttsurini and Kudou-san are holding is slowly reaching that horrifying point of accident. Even if we knew it was coming, we’re still mentally unable to endure that kind of bone-chilling torture. The pressure through the monitor is still so great that it's nearly incapable of stopping the cries rushing up to our mouths.

“If, if Tsuchiya-kun fails too, our only counter will be to let Akihisa-kun dress up in a cute girl outfit…”

“Ye, yeah. This is the only move left. It can’t be helped.”

“You two are saying such a weird proposal because you’re already scarred mentally, right? You don’t really want me to dress up in a cute girl outfit, right?”

““…””

I’ll pretend the reason both of them aren’t responding is because they’re ready to close their eyes and cover their ears, so they don’t have time to respond back to me, I hope.

(Muttsurini-kun, that interesting person just now should be right in front, right?)

(…All's prepared)

The duo seem rather calm as they head closer towards the target, in contrast to everyone else who's curled up in this classroom because of the horrifying scene.

Kudou-san is in charge of holding the camera, while Muttsurini's hands are holding something. Looks like that's the item they're preparing to use in order to deal with that baldy-sempai.

"It still looks rather dark."

"This is to make sure the effect of sudden shock works better. They're probably estimating the best time to turn on the spotlight."

In the midst of the darkness, the camera captures a shadow.

"Almost there."

"Un…!"

I exert all my strength in my stomach to prepare for the impact that will soon arrive.

It's coming, it's coming…!

PAK (the sound of the spotlight switch being flipped on)

DONK! (the sound of Muttsurini taking out a large mirror and placing it right in front of him)

KEBOKEBOKEBOKEBO!!! (the sound of the baldy-sempai vomiting)

(You, you bastard! WHAT KIND OF DISGUSTING THING ARE YOU

SHOWING ME! I STARTED VOMITTING AFTER SEEING IT!)

(…Vomiting itself isn’t shameful. It’s something anyone will do after seeing it.)

(DAMN IT! THIS DISGUSTING LOOK EXCEEDS MY EXPECTATIONS… NO WONDER THOSE GUYS IN OUR CLASS WON’T ALLOW ME TO LOOK AT THE SEMPAI…)

(Muttsurini-kun, this sempai looks rather interesting. I think it’s fine if I get to know him if there’s an afterlife.)

(WAIT A SECOND! YOU TWERP! DIDN’T YOU JUST DENY MY EXISTENCE IN THIS LIFE! AND WILL YOU ONLY RECOGNIZE ME EVEN IF I’M IN THE AFTERLIFE!?)

(Ah, sorry, I didn’t really have any ill intent, puking-guy.)

(WHY DO I FEEL UTTER MALICE FROM YOU!? OI! HOLD IT RIGHT THERE! WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO AFTER TAKING PHOTOS OF ME LIKE THIS!!)

(…I’m going to upload them onto foreign horror websites.)

(STO, STOP JOKING AROUND! YOU BETTER REMEMBER THIS—)

The baldy-sempai dashes out and vanishes. Now, the biggest threat in D classroom’s horror house is probably removed.

“Speaking of which, I didn’t expect Kudou-san to be so vicious in her words. Baldy-sempai ran off crying…”

“…Aiko normally won’t say those words.”

“In other words, someone taught her?”

“Yeah, it seems that Kudou exchanged words with Shimizu before or something.”

“I see, no wonder she sent that baldy-sempai crying…”

I see, so that’s Kudou-san’s ploy to deal with the baldy-senpai. Let him first see the image of himself on the screen, let him understand how disgustingly ugly he is, and then deliver the insulting skills Shimizu-san taught her to deliver severe emotional damage that can’t be repaired. This is amazing.

(…Let’s keep going.)

(The checkpoint should be around here.)

The duo on the monitor screen walk towards where the baldy-sempai ran off to. After walking down the path that’s separated by panels, two figures appear right in front of them. Those two should be 3rd year students. Just as we thought, the checkpoint here is located not too far away after that horror zone.

“That’s weird? The baldy-sempai’s not at this checkpoint. I thought he will be the one in charge of this place.”

“This might not be the case. He may be in charge of A classroom or C classroom after that.”

“He probably won’t appear again, right?”

“It’ll be trouble if he doesn’t show up. I deliberately taunted him to lure him out.”

They’re A class students, but looking at the scores up till now, the Toko-Natsu pair’s scores aren’t that high. Most likely, Yuuji taunted them thinking that they’re easier to deal with.

“Well, we’ll talk about the rest later. The most important thing right now is this.”

“You’re right.”

I look back at the monitor, and the 4 people at D classroom’s checkpoint are all facing each other, getting ready to call out their summoned beasts.

(((Summon)))

Muttsurini's summoned beast is the vampire we saw before, while Kudou-san's a Noppera-bou[8]. From the back, both of their summoned beasts look like ordinary people.

"Kudou-san's summoned beast is a Noppera-bou. What does this mean?"

"Who knows…if she doesn't have a face, maybe she doesn't want others seeing her real self."

Not letting others see her true self, huh…if Kudou-san's unique trait or true self is to hide her real self, those sexual harassment-like lines of her are probably to protect herself. This is really unexpected. She looks so energetic and carefree, so maybe she may have had some painful experiences in the past, or something happened in her family…

"Speaking of which, I investigated on some monster rumors when finding themes for drama, and there's a little-known rumor about the Noppera-bou."

"Rumors?"

"Um. It seems that when the Noppera-bou meets a person, it will strip itself of its clothing and bare itself naked."

Return to me my worries.

"I see. Our summoned beasts' aren't that much different from ourselves, so Kudou-san's situation is a lot easier to understand."

"Yeah. In that case, it'll be a lot easier to predict the enemy's next actions."

On the other hand, the summoned beasts the 3rd year-sempais called out are a mummy and a Frankenstein monster. These are rather famous monsters as we recognise them on first sight. These two sempais' features are probably the kind that will get hurt easily or that they're naturally gentle.

A class, Ichihara Ryojirou, Health Education 303 points

and

A class, Nanami Kenichi, Health Education 301 points.

Both their scores have broken through the 300 point mark. Health education isn't a compulsory subject. There's no need to be so serious about studying it. Are A class students that serious in learning?

(Muttsurini-kun, the seniors' summoned beasts look impressive, and they have one more year's worth of summoned beast control compared to us, so this might the tough, right?)

(…They're really strong.)

Then, Muttsurini and Kudou-san's scores are shown as well.

A class, Kudou Aiko, Health Education 479 points

and

F class, Tsuchiya Kouta, Health Education 557 points.

(…But they're no match for Kudou-san and me.)

(That's true.)

Before I can even blink my eyes, the mummy and the Frankenstein monster can't even react as they lie flat on the floor weakly. Because of this, we can see the overwhelming difference in both sides' battle strength. With regards to the subject of Health Education, I suppose even teachers can't match Muttsurini and Kudou-san.

"Yuuji, did you see what just happened?"

"Yeah, though I didn't see it really clearly…but the vampire seemed to have become a wolf, ripped the Frankenstein monster, and immediately went back to human form again."

That’s really scary…that attack speed is really shocking…

“And the Noppera-bou?”

“As for her, I didn’t see it clearly…it looks like it went naked for an instant, started slamming the mummy’s body, and immediately put on its clothes again.”

I really don’t know…is there a need to take off its clothing while fighting each other?

“Also, Muttsurini managed to lose blood, stop the bleeding and transfuse blood all at the same time.”

THAT’S AMAZING…! HE ACTUALLY HAD A REACTION TO KUDOU-SAN’S NAKED SUMMONED BEAST DURING A BATTLE. SUCH A PERVERTED MINDSET!

“…Yuuji’s an accomplice in unfaithfulness.”

“WHAT? YOU, YOU’RE MISTAKEN!? I DIDN’T WANT TO SEE KUDOU’S NAKED SUMMONED BEAST. IT WAS ALL IRRESISTABLE—GGGYYYAAAAAHHHHHH!!”

“…I won’t forgive you for being unfaithful.”

The most realistic test of courage tournament is happening right beside me. This is the biggest reason why our F class guys have more immunity to monsters compared to the other classes.

(Now D classroom is cleared. Where are we going next?)

(…C classroom.)

(Okay, got it. Speaking of which, Muttsurini-kun, why does your nose have tissue papers stuffed in them?)

(…Pollen sickness.)

(Heh~ is that so? So it’s pollen sickness~)

Kudou-san’s smiling rather happily, maybe because she already guessed the real reason Muttsurini’s nosebleeding.

Damn it! Why…why can’t my eyes track Kudou-san’s summoned beast’s speed!

“Well…Akihisa-kun, are you thinking of some pervy things?”

“No, I’m not thinking of any.”

“Your true thoughts?”

“I’ll definitely ask Muttsurini to let me see that battle footage just now in slow motion.”

“This is the hard disk Tsuchiya-kun is using to record the test of courage tournament’s proceedings.”

“AHHHHHHH!!! HIMEJI-SAN, PLEASE RETURN THAT TO ME! YOU CAN’T TAKE THAT AWAY! THAT…WELL…YEAH! THIS MIGHT BE THE BEST EVIDENCE TO SEE IF THE OPPONENT IS BREAKING THE RULES!”

“It’s alright. There are many students here who can be witnesses.”

Too cruel…besides me, Muttsurini will definitely be crying tears of blood once he comes back from this test of courage tournament.

“Is, is that so…so Aki has interests in girls with small breasts too…””

For some reason, Minami has her hand on her chest as she gives a sigh of relief.

(That’s weird? What monster is that woman with two mouths?)

(…Futakuchi-onna)[9]

(Un, what's that woman with a long-stretching body?)

(…Takaonna)[10]

(Then, what about that guy with thick fur?)

(…Who cares.)

The classroom is a lot narrower than B classroom, but still several times wider than D classroom. Muttsurini and Kudou-san continue chatting as they walk. Having faced that baldy-sempai, they don't feel a sense of fear when facing those normal monsters as they head on.

"Yuuji, things seem to be proceeding smoothly. These two might be able to clear all the checkpoints if this keeps up, right?'

I really can't imagine those two screaming after being shocked by monsters. The 3rd years must be thinking of something to deal with those two.

"No, that might not be the case. The opponent may have seen through Muttsurini's true nature after seeing the health education score just now. I think it's time they start revealing a method to deal with Muttsurini."

"Eh? What do you mean?'

"Even if those 3rd years haven't heard of the nickname Muttsurini, they should know about 'a pervert who's abnormally proficient at Health Education'. It seems that they might have realized Muttsurini's weakness."

"Weakness? If it's Muttsurini's weakness, he'll just faint by nosebleed, but won't cry out because of this, right?"

"Yeah, he probably won't cry out."

It seems that Yuuji's tone implies that something's about to happen. Don't tell me the 3rd years don't intend to scare Muttsurini into screaming, but something else?

“Yuuji, what do you mean by this?”

“Even if they don’t force him to scream, if Muttsurini can make some loud sound or something, it’ll be their win, like the noise from nosebleeding or something.”

“Ah, ahaha…what are you saying, Yuuji? How can the 3rd years possibly do this?”

”Never mind, you’ll understand if you continue watching…I suppose it’s about time.”

Our stares return back to the monitor, and the camera those two were holding shows a female figure standing under the dim light. Is that person ‘the counter to deal with Muttsurini’ Yuuji was talking about?

(…!(Widens eyes))

(Mu, Muttsurini-kun? Why are you looking so serious—ah, I see..)

The female’s figure gradually becomes clearer under the dim yellow light.

It is a beauty with her hair tied, and a pair of long narrow eyes—and she has an erotic-looking kimono that looks like it’s going to collapse draped on her shoulders.

“”””IT’S REALLY A BLESSING TO THE EYES!!!”””

The roars of delighted boys echo throughout the classroom.

If I have to describe it, that cold-looking expression and slender long limbs should be similar to Kirishima-san. It’s not unreasonable for everyone to be so excited when such a beauty is wearing a kimono and appearing bewitchingly in front of us. If not for Himeji-san, Minami and Hideyoshi sitting right beside me, I’ll definitely be roaring out in delight.

“…Yuuji.”

“I, I’M NOT LOOKING! I DIDN’T SEE ANYTHING AT ALL!”

“…I’ll look like that too if I have a kimono on.”

Oh, it’s rare for Kirishima-san to give a cute expression when she puffs her cheeks. Is her heart feeling competitive because Yuuji saw a pretty girl of the same type as her?

“You’re mistaken. I didn’t ask you to wear a kimono.”

“…Nice, I was wondering what to wear for the wedding.”

“Hm? Are you talking about the Western type or a kimono? Leaving aside who’s going to get married, you can wear both if you’re really bothered—”

“…Then, I’ll wear a kimono and a maid outfit with cat ears.”

“WHAT’S WITH THIS SELECTION!? YOUR PARENTS ATTENDING THE WEDDING WILL BE CRYING BECAUSE OF ALL SORTS OF REASONS!!”

Oh yeah, Kirishima-san wore a Western wedding gown at Kisaragi Highlands before. Un un, Kirishima-san is a girl after all.

(…This…level…of get-up…is impossible…to take me…ugh!)

(…Muttsurini-kun, your feet don’t look like they’re able to hang on, you know?)

(…(Shakes head frantically))

Not good! The opponent just caused Muttsurini to nearly collapse. That kimono with the chest side slightly opened is nearly causing Muttsurini to lose consciousness! However…

“Amazing! That Muttsurini can actually resist nosebleeding even when facing such a bewitching beauty! He basically won!”

That beautiful figure is causing us to roar out in delight while we’re watching,

but Muttsurini, who's facing the opponent directly, is actually able to hold his nosebleed…the old Muttsurini will definitely be unable to do this. We'll take this win.

"No, hold on! Looks like they still have one more!"

"Eh?"

Yuuji's voice awakens me from the excitement. Another one? Impossible? This is—

(Welcome here, you two. I'm Kogure Aoi from class 3-A.)

The lady with sexy voice and moist eyes doesn't reveal more of her skin even though she bows to introduce herself.

Not good, this woman…this isn't good.

(So it's Kogure-sempai. Hello, I'm class 2-A's Kudou Aiko. That kimono really suits you.)

(Thank you for your praise. I am a member of the Tea Ceremony Club after all.)

(Ah, really? So the Tea Ceremony Club members wear kimonos as well? So is that your club attire? It does look rather erotic when you wear it, sempai.)

(Yes, I'm wearing our club attire.)

(Then…I'm sorry, we have something busy to deal with, so we'll be off first!)

(And also, I actually—)

(Hm? What? Is there anything?)

(--I also belong to the gymnastics club)

The kimono that reveals the breasts slightly fades off—and what appears under it is Kogure-sempai in a leotard.

“Tsuchiya Kouta, noise level beyond the limit, and the monitor’s dyed red by him! Fail!”

“DAMN IT! THIS ACT IS WAY TOO DESPICABLE! THE SLIGHTLY REVEALED KIMONO FORCED HIM TO HIS LIMIT, AND THERE’S A LEOTARD THAT BARES SO MUCH UNDERNEATH!? HOW CAN THAT MUTTSURINI TAKE IT AFTER SEEING SUCH A SCENE!”

“THAT’S RIGHT! COMING UP WITH SUCH AN UNDERHANDED METHOD! YUUJI, HURRY UP AND THINK OF SOMETHING! I’LL GO OVER TO HIMEJI-SAN TO KNEEL DOWN AND BEG HER TO HAND ME THE HARD DISK FOR RECORDING!”

“I GET IT! AKIHISA, DON’T GET CARELESS!’

“OF COURSE! I MUST RECORD THIS NO MATTER WHAT!”

The burden that rests on me is rather heavy. Either way, I have to put it back before she deletes the images—that’s why? Why do I feel my sights fading?

“Aki, you can’t just leave things to Sakamoto and let him think of a plan. Isn’t that right, Mizuki?”

“Yes. You should be using your head and not your eyes this time, Akihisa-kun.”

IT HURTS! MY EYES HURT! WHY IS THIS HAPPENING!? MY EYES HURT A SECOND AFTER THEY’RE POKED! AS EXPECTED OF MINAMI, THIS ISN’T SOMETHING A NORMAL PERSON CAN DO…

“Yuuji, are your eyes faulty for seeing dirty things?”

“UAHHHH!!! WHAT ‘EYES FAULTY FOR SEEING DIRTY THINGS’, SHOUKO! DON’T POKE MY EYES WHILE PINCHING MY EARS AND MOUTH! THIS LEVEL OF PUNISHMENT ISN’T CUTE AT ALL!”

Guu…! To think this once in a million chance actually came with this moment of despair…I have to think of something!”

“Himeji-san, consider this a plea from me! Now’s a ‘pinsu’[11] that’s extremely rare! So please hand me the hard disk!”

“Akihisa. You added a word. It’s like a next generation language here.”

Damn it, I got too anxious.

“THIS ISN’T GOOD! TSUCHIYA IS IN DANGER! I HAVE TO GO SAVE HIM!”

“IT’S DANGEROUS FOR YOU TO GO ALONE! I’LL GO ALONG TOO!”

“WAIT UP! I’M CONCERNED ABOUT TSUCHIYA’S STATUS TOO!”

“I WANT TO GO TOO! HOW CAN I ABANDON MY BUDDIES HERE!”

As I’m trying to snatch back the hard disk from Himeji-san, my classmates from F class are acting on their own.

EVERYONE, YOU CAN’T! IF YOU GO THERE IN SUCH A SITUATION—

“““OOOHHHHHHHH!!! GYMNASTICS—!!”””

“…Everyone got disqualified the moment they went in…”

“Why are the guys in our school a bunch of idiots…”

“I think I finally understand how that peeping incident happened…”

Our good brothers ended up getting disqualified one after another. Things were still going smoothly before, but our forces have dropped drastically now.

“U…uu…well, this is bad…if we let them act on their own, all the guys except

for Kubo will all be annihilated!”

Yuuji covers his eyes as he mutters. I see, so the ever serious Kubo-kun won’t go about squealing like that, so of course he won’t run into the haunted house like that. Also, it doesn’t look like he has much interest in girls.

“That’s right. Yuuji, better send me in to overcome this situation.”

“Aki, haven’t you learnt your lesson at this point?”

“Akihisa-kun, if you’re not going to learn your lesson, I’ll tell your sister.”

Better give up on going then. Time to think through this calmly. This isn’t actually something so big that I have to put my life on the line.

“Can’t be helped. If they’re coming up with an erotic trap, we’ll just—”

“Send girls in! Alright, Hideyoshi, we’ll leave this course to you!”

“Akihisa, it seems that you’re mistaken about something. I do have interests in the other gender. If you don’t remember this, I’ll feel bothered here.”

“…Eh…? You want me to remember that you have interests in the other gender? Hideyoshi…if you say such things in front of everyone, I’ll…well…”

“Wa, wait a second, Akihisa! I’d wasn’t confessing to you in an indirect way! Why is your face blushing!”

Uwah… My face is feeling hot…my sweat seems to be dry.

“This isn’t fair…why is it that Kinoshita-kun’s words are treated like a confession just like that…”

“I did kiss him before—”

“Well, Himeji and Shimada, you don’t have to worry about this. Hideyoshi’s a guy either way, so their souls are rather close to each other.”

Yuuji is trying to encourage Himeji-san and Minami who seem depressed for some reason.

“Anyway, the most important thing now is still this test of courage tournament! Everyone listen up! It’ll be the Kinoshita sisters going in!”

“Yuuji! Did you just say Kinoshita ‘sisters’?”

“Hideyoshi, I’ll leave things to you.”

“Hideyoshi, please. If you can come back safely…I, I have something else I want to say to you.”

“Hearing you say such things make me feel like things won’t end even if I come back safely…”

Hideyoshi sighs heavily and drags his feet towards his sister reluctantly.

The Fourth Question

Yoshii Akihisa and Sakamoto Yuuji's real horror story introduction.

AOI KOGURE

“That’s how it is. I, Yoshii Akihisa, and…”

“I, Sakamoto Yuuji…”

“Will introduce to everyone ‘horror experiences’ our readers have passionately sent in.”

“Isn’t this plan too weird?”

“Even if you say so, it’s proper manners not to say it out and keep it in your heart, Yuuji.”

“You already revealed your true thoughts when you say things like that. Never mind, Akihisa. Start introducing the first mail.”

“Understood. Today’s first mail is from a person with the handle name ‘I’m the strongest A-boy in Shibuya’.”

“There’s a lot of things I want to say here. He can call himself B-boy anyway, or put the name as Akihabara.”

“Let’s see…the paragraph in the mail looks like it’s written in a Hip-Hop tune, so I think it’s better to read it in a Hip-Hop manner, I suppose?”

“Hip-Hop? I don’t understand what that means, but if you can do so, try reading it in a suitable manner.”

“Got it. Here I go— ‘Yeah, I’m the strongest A-boy in Shibuya yo! Always working hard to glory! But I don’t do for supplementary lessons!’”

“If you want to head to glory, don’t skip supplementary lessons.”

“‘Listen to my this, turn around and look!’”

“See, it’s because you skipped supplementary lessons that you mixed up ‘this’ and ‘disc’.”

“‘I don’t listen to anyone! I have countless women crying because of me!’”

“That crying woman should be your mother, right?”

“My rap is energetic and loud! All the Japs nearby are crying for their mommas!’”

“Hm…? Rap…? Ahh, I see…oi Akihisa, you don’t have to continue reading.”

“‘The scary guy is really’—eh? I don’t have to continue? The scary part hasn’t appeared yet.”

“Don’t mind.”

“But…”

“But you can send a mail back to him that he mixed up Rap with supernatural sounds.”[12]

“Heh?”

“…Don’t make me explain it.”

“…Ah…I see…”

“…That’s how it is.”

“…I shouldn’t have opened that mail in the first place…”

“…I feel so too…for some reason, I feel like apologizing even though it’s not my fault…”

(A test of courage tournament…this is kind of bad. This kind of thing is what I’m weakest at.)

(Ane-ue, you stepped on it. You stepped on the karakasa-obake!)[13]

(Ah sorry. I didn’t spoil it, right?)

I see. Those two are really amazing. I can’t see them losing their composure or panicking or even geting baited by the honey trap. It’s like there are flowers saddled around them when I look at them. However, it’ll be nice if they can get

along well.

“If it’s the two of them, we should be able to progress safely.”

“Yeah. The Kinoshitas probably won’t fall into any honey traps.”

Nothing actually happens on the way, and Hideyoshi’s group finally appears at where that beauty sempai is.

(Oh my? You two…I see, since you’re both girls, I can’t stop you two. Please proceed on your own.)

(That’s what she said, Hideyoshi. We’ll listen to sempai and proceed on.)

(Muu…even though we’re allowed to pass through, how should I explain the bitterness in my heart…)

The senior in the kimono backs aside, not intending to get in their way.

“That sempai simply opened a way for them.”

“Yeah. Either way, this lack of resistance from her is way too weird.”

My stare again returns back to the monitor. As Hideyoshi and his sister moves from the senior in kimono, the other one of the Toko-Natsu pair—the Mohawk head (Tsunemura) sempai is standing there.

“What in the world? Is this what they’re using to deal with Hideyoshi? But he doesn’t look as weird as that baldy-senpai. I don’t see anything that’s going to make anyone scream.”

Either way, I can’t see anything weird. That Mohawk-sempai is just standing there. Is he going to call out a powerful summoned beast? Like something that will cause Hideyoshi to scream once he sees something horrible…no, it doesn’t look like he’ll be calling out his summoned beast.

(You finally came, Kinoshita. I’ve been waiting for you.)

(What is it? Were thou waiting for me? What is tis you want?)

(I don’t know what’s going on, but if you have something on, just hurry up and settle it, Hideyoshi. We still have to go on.)

(You’re right. I don’t know what you want, but please keep it short.)

(Un, it’s fine. I won’t take too long…Kinoshita Hideyoshi, please listen.)

(What is it?)

On the screen, the Mohawk-sempai looks serious as he walks towards Hideyoshi.

Then, he says to Hideyoshi with a clear, unmistakeable tone,

(—I've always loved you.)

For the first time in my life—I heard Hideyoshi scream for real.

☆

“I, I’m really sorry, Yuuji, Akihisa…I actually made such an embarrassing scream…”

“You don’t have to worry, Hideyoshi. It’s understandable that you were confessed to by a gay—and a disgusting guy like that.”

“Yeah, Hideyoshi. Your sister was going ‘why am I left aside, why am I…!’ while carrying out wrestling moves on you. It’s impressive that you only screamed out.”

“Ane-ue’s wrestling moves were really bad…but I’d had the worst when he started reading that love poem that he wrote when thinking about me…”

That was really an incomparable torture to the body and soul. I stopped trying to maintain consciousness the moment I heard the line ‘You’re the sun shining on me’. Of course, the fear Hideyoshi felt, who listened until the very end, couldn’t be measured.

“If possible, I wanted to use ane-ue’s power to break through C classroom…and even if we couldn’t, I hoped to at least wear them out.”

The situation now is bad. There’s not a lot of people who can break through that kimono-sempai (is she called Kogure-sempai or something?). Maybe Yuuji and Kirishima-san can get through safely, but they will have to bear the heavy mission of breaking through A class’ checkpoints. We can’t let them proceed without knowing the traps within A classroom.

“You don’t have to worry, Hideyoshi. They have roughly gotten information on our side, but we do have a secret weapon here. If it’s these two, they won’t be fooled by appearances, and should probably clear this successfully.”

“Eh? Do we have such people?”

The people from F class are being disqualified one after another, and the other ordinary boys from the other classes probably won’t be able to get through Kogure-sempai’s temptation, right?

“The girls will likely be afraid of the crewcut-sempai (Natsukawa) in girls cosplay and the Mohawk-sempai (Tsunemura) and won’t proceed on…”

“No, the Toko-Natsu pair won’t be able to scare us anymore. The golita got sent off like that, so it probably won’t appear again. Also, the Mohawk-sempai’s confession seems to be a tactic targeted at Hideyoshi.”

That’s true. Tsunemura-sempai’s confession just now wasn’t an act as it was able to scare Hideyoshi like that. Hideyoshi will probably be able to see through it if it were an act. Speaking of which, that confession just now…is probably from deep within his heart.

“Is that so…that moment was a serious move targeted at Hideyoshi…?”

Seriously. Hideyoshi's body visibly trembles once he hears that line. It seems that the confession just now left quite an emotional scar in him.

"That's how it is. That kind of dangerous attack won't happen again."

From the his tone, it seems that he's deliberately trying to explain it to me. Why is he explaining it over and over again to me?

"So you can go on ahead safely, Akihisa and Shimada."

"Eh? What? Are you saying the secret weapon is Minami and me?"

"Do, don't joke around! You're sending us to our deaths even after we saw such things?"

Minami hugs herself as she shows a scared look, maybe because she saw the opponent's psychological attacks one after another. Looking at her right now, we might be disqualified before we even reach the checkpoint…

"Yuuji, this is really too hard. Minami's really scared now, and even if we can really last until the checkpoint, Minami and my points won't be able to beat the 3-A students."

It's not like Yuuji to not even consider this.

"You don't have to think so much. Just enjoy the test of courage trip with Shimada. Shimada…listen to me, you just need to close your eyes and grab Akihisa's hand."

"Uu…I, I'm not scared…"

"Ahh, I know, I know. What I mean is, since Akihisa will be scared, I hope you'll accompany him, Shimada. Akihisa has his own pride as a man, so he wants you to close your eyes and grab his arm."

"Is, is that so? Since you say so, Sakamoto, it's not like I can't close my eyes and grab Aki. But it's not because I'm scared, and I'm not grabbing Aki because I want to be close to him!"

"Well…Shimada's not straightforward…"

“Did you say something, Kinoshita!?”

“No, I said nothing.”

Minami’s stubbornness is really troublesome.”

“Never mind. I don’t know exactly what’s going on, but since Yuuji says so, I’ll go in then. Let’s go, Minami.”

“Uu…r, right.”

“We, well, Minami-chan! If you don’t want to go in, I can…”

“Uun! It’s not like I don’t want to go in! I’ve always been looking forward to it, really, really looking forward to it! Also, Aki and I were already assigned to go in! Hey, let’s go, Aki!”

“AGAAH! Mi, Minami? You just need to grab the arm. You don’t have to use wrestling moves, right…”

“Ahh, Akihisa, hold on a moment.”

As Minami is dragging me and ready to leave the class, Yuuji suddenly calls us.

“Is, is there anything, Yuuji?”

We stop, and Yuuji walks over to us to whisper to me.

(I’m going to give you some instructions. Once you get to that kimono girl, I want you two to hide and check whether there are any other people around and secretly come back. Understand?)

(Eh? What does that mean? Won’t I be disqualified if I come back like that?)

Like Yuuji, I keep my voice down.

(Don’t worry. You won’t be considered disqualified unless you let out a scream higher than the limit, or if your summoned beasts lose in battle. The rules never stated that you can’t come back, so there’s no problem.)

(It’s fine if there’re no problems, but is there any particular reason as to why

we’re to do this?)

(Alright, just hurry up and get in!)

Yuuji pats my back and looks like he wants to hurry me out of the classroom.

It’s simple for me to follow his instructions, but I have no idea why Yuuji wants me to do this. We’re going so far away, and he wants me to secretly come back…what is Yuuji planning to do?

“Uu, never mind. Let’s do our best, Minami.”

“Uuu…!”

My arm that’s being grabbed onto by Minami is starting to feel numb due to lack of blood circulation, and I’m seriously worried about my arm.

“…Let’s go, Shimizu-san. Our battle begins.”

“…You’re right.”

As we walk into the corridor, I seem to hear some whispering.

Pa. It seems that something floats by.

“Woah!”

“—!!”

That surprised me. Is that a cotton cloth floating by? It looks like a ghost in a cloth made from an old curtain, and it does look rather scary with the dim

expression.

“UBOAHHH…”

“—!”

This time, it’s a figure of an arm that’s dyed red turning towards an inexplicable direction. That should be someone’s summoned beast, I guess? The main person lets out a horrifying scream from the front, and the summoned beast closes in from the back…this is quite an effective move, but the sight of Kirishima-san punishing Yuuji looks a lot more disgusting than this.

“It’s a little disgusting, but you can still take this, right, Minami?”

“(Shakes head frantically)!”

This isn’t okay at all! Minami shakes her head to refute what I said. Uu… Minami’s creating damage on my body that’s much more shocking to me here, so why is she still so scared here?

We continue to head to the exit through the maze that’s made of panels and black cloth. Damn it, I can’t see the path below us clearly. We might get lost.

“Speaking of which…Minami, it’s hard for me to walk when you cling onto me like this…”

One of my hands is holding onto the camera, while the other one is being held on tightly by her. At this rate, even if I reach the door, I won’t be able to open it. No, the arm held so tightly by Minami, but I hope that the area below the elbow can move freely.

“—(Shakes head frantically)”

Not good. Minami’s clinging onto my arm tightly and unwilling to let go. Also, I think my wrist joint is going to get dislocated by her.

It seems like whatever I say won’t reach her ears, so I can only move forward. Well, about that…I have to say I’ll be lying if I say that I’m not happy, but it’s kind of pitiful seeing her being so terrified. Is there anything that can divert Minami’s attention?

“Ah, Minami, there’s a window over there. If you just look over outside the window, maybe you can—”

The cellophane paper that’s stuck on the window limits the amount of light shining into the haunted house, but we can still see the scenery outside the classroom. I suppose Minami should be able to regain some life after seeing something familiar, right?

(Kihihihihihi…! I hate…)

The head of a long-necked woman floats by outside the window, and it looks real. Whose summoned beast is that? I can even see the details of the forehead floating by takes to the light. I was careless because I thought we can see the scenery outside, but such a shocking image will definitely cause a stronger fear in her.

“…Sorry for that. I didn’t actually expect this.”

“Uu…I don’t want this…I shouldn’t have come…let’s hurry up and go back, Aki…”

Minami lifts her teary wide eyes and earnestly begs me. Uwa, isn’t that just too cute!? Not good, this isn’t the Minami I know…

SHAKA!

“Heh?”

Suddenly, a mechanical pencil comes flying from behind, grazing my face and stabbing into the wall.

Tsul…a bright red liquid slowly drops down my face.

“Ah, ahaha…what kind of trap is this? It’s really direct…”

This mechanical pencil that’s stabbed into the wall is made of metal, and it not only destroys the wall, it even pierced through it. This mechanism is really too scary! The rules should specify that direct attacks are forbidden, right? No matter what, that kind of dangerous thing shouldn’t be aimed at the body, right?

“…I won’t miss next time, you bastard swine…”

Damn it! I feel an ever-serious killing intent coming from behind me. This isn’t just the mood of a mere test of courage tournament, but a real terror attacking me.

“Mi, Minami, let’s just do our best for a little longer. We can go back to the classroom later.”

“…Si, since you say so, Aki, I’ll do my best…”

The weak and helpless Minami nods as well. Damn it! This really won’t be good. I really want to turn our F classroom into a haunted house to let Minami be in such a pitiful state all year around.

“Shimizu-san, calm down first. It’s still too early to make your move here.”

“Yo, you’re right. We should head to a more scary place and pull onee-sama away from that swine.”

“It’s a good thing the rules never specified that we can’t switch partners midway. Sakamoto-kun’s setting of the rules is really impressive.”

Anyway, I better follow Yuuji’s instructions and try to get to that Kimono-sempai first. Yuuji wants me to reach there and then secretly head back. In that case, I can also fulfill Minami’s earnest wish of leaving this place and hurrying back.

I continue to head to the target based on the vague memory I had of the monitor. Whenever there’s a point where it is scary, Minami will tense up really badly and grab my even tighter, but the killing intent behind me isn’t that obvious. I have no idea what kind of thing is behind us, but if it’s some distance away, that thing probably won’t be able to see our movements.

“Speaking of which, I didn’t expect you to be so scared of haunted houses, Minami.”

If I don’t say anything, Minami will probably be more terrified, so I decide to

talk to her randomly.

“Tha, that’s because…it can’t be helped. It’s okay if it’s German ghosts, but I don’t know anything about Japanese youkais…like how a lantern will stick out a mouth and limbs, or an ordinary girl suddenly stretching her neck really long, I don’t know anything about them at all…”

Ahh, I see. Minami doesn’t know anything about how some of the youkais look like, so that’s why she’s really scared right? People will be terrified of ‘things they don’t really know about’, so it can’t be helped for Minami to be scared when she isn’t familiar with Japanese youkais.

“But you should hurry up and familiarize yourself with Japan.”

“It doesn’t matter…if I have to get used to that kind of thing, I might as well return back to Germany.”

Minami puffs her cheeks unhappily as she says this. Does she really hate youkais…?

“But Minami, it’ll be so lonely if you head back to Germany on your own…”

“Of course not. I won’t feel lonely at all. I do have my friends there, so even if I go there, I won’t be alone!”

Minami argues back against in a stubborn tone. Eh? Is she misunderstanding me?

“Ahh, no, that’s not what I mean,”

“Then what do you mean?”

“The ones feeling lonely will be this bunch of friends here.”

“…Eh…?”

Minami can’t hide her face full of surprise after hearing me say this as she turns to look at me. Is it weird that I feel lonely?

“Aki…why do you feel so lonely?”

“Ah? You’re asking this? I will feel lonely.”

“I’m saying, why will you feel lonely?”

Minami continues to ask insistently.

What? The terrified expression on her face just a moment ago has disappeared. Minami now looks ever-serious…is the answer to this question so important?”

“…”

Minami continues to stare right at my eyes.

Since Minami is being so serious, I have to answer her question seriously.

Uu…the reason why I feel lonely when a certain person is not around…I don’t know if this can be considered an answer, but I guess—

“Because I’ll feel lonely when one of the friends who hangs out with me suddenly leaves.”

“Normally hang ou…”

“Un.”

I probably won’t feel extremely lonely if someone who I don’t usually hang out with leaves. If I feel lonely when someone is leaving, it means that the person is very close to me. I guess it’s because we’re together so often…though my sister and mom are exceptions here.

“You’re saying…that you hope that I remain with you…right?”

“Hm? Sorta…I guess.”

For some reason, I feel that the meaning’s kind of different, but I guess this is roughly what I want to convey.

“The, then…”

“Hm? What is it?”

“Then…if I say that I’m willing to be with you forever…will you accept it, Aki?”

She wants to sit beside me? Minami still wants to sit next to me, when I have the worst position, in such a bad studying environment? Even if Minami has confidence in her physical health, I don’t want her doing something stupid.

“My seat and the ones around me are all very hot. Also, cold air will blow in from the gaps during winter. It’s freezing, so I better advise you not to.”

“Aki, you better not answer me with such stupid words.”

“Eh? Ah…yes, sorry!”

What? Why is Minami throwing a tantrum at me? I feel that our conversation don’t seem to match.

“That’s not what I want to hear. I want to know…”

Just when Minami feels like she wants to say something—

“I feel that onee-sama is being fooled…I hate you…I want to curse you…I want to kill you!”

Crck crck crck crck I feel that there’s a curse that’s being uttered really fast and getting closer to me. Thi, this is too scary!

“Ky—umu!”

I hurriedly cover Minami’s mouth just when she’s about to cry out. Now’s not the time to talk about sitting beside me or anything. We’ll definitely be disqualified at this rate!

“Minami, I know it’s a little rough of me, but sorry.”

“—Buha! There, there’s something closing in! Aki, we have to hurry up and get away from here…”

Minami timidly looks over at the pitch-black darkness. To a certain extent, it’s

really scary to be unable to see anything at all!

“No, Minami, it’ll be scarier if we continue running away. Don’t worry, they probably won’t hurt us, so let’s calm down.”

SHAKAKAKA!! (Mechanical pencils x 3)

“Let’s go then. How about we run away, Minami?”

“Un…”

I continue to dodge the stationery flying over as Minami and I hasten our pace.

What’s chasing us is definitely not a summoned beast. No, I don’t think this is the doing of the 3rd years either…

“I won’t let you get away! I’ll continue pursuing you until I get onee-sama back, even if I have to run to the ends of the world!”

“Shimizu-san, you’re looking much more savage than any of the youkais around here.”

The horror that’s pursuing us—the real identity of the horror may be right beside us.

“—!!”

Minami closes her eyes as she grabs onto my hand and runs, but in this posture, there’s a limit to how fast she can try to run faster. At this rate, we’ll probably be caught up soon.

“In that case…I can only do this!”

C classroom isn’t that big, so there’s practically no chance of escaping or running away from the pursuers behind us. In that case, we can only use this move to hide.

“Minami, you hear me? Once I give the signal, keep your voice down and summon.”

“Eh? I, I got it…I can call out my summoned beast if you want…”

At this moment, we’re reaching a fork in the middle of this small maze. I deliberately bring Minami to the side blocked by a panel, hide behind it, and give the signal to her.

(Now, Minami.)

(Uuu…sa, summon)

Minami’s summoned beast appears. Un. As expected, it’s a complete flat piece of wall.

(Aki, I suddenly have an urge to really beat you up.)

Minami’s instincts are so sharp it’s shocking.

(You’re thinking too much here, Minami. Let’s not talk about this. Let your summoned beast stand in front of us…yes yes, just like that. Now, we need to keep quiet, so don’t let out any noises.)

(It doesn’t really matter…)

The chibi-sized summoned beasts before would probably be unable to block anything, so luckily, this summoned beast is about the same size as us. In that case, we probably won’t be discovered if we’re hidden behind the concrete wall.

“Onee-sama, onee-sama…I definitely won’t let you run away…kekekekekekeke~”

“Shimizu-san, you’re really so evil that the surrounding air is distorted.”

Minami and I hold our breaths as we wait for the evil gods to pass by.

The demon with 2 drill braids that is dominated by her emotions doesn't seem to notice the weirdness of the surroundings as it hurriedly passes by the path we were hiding on.

To play it safe, we continue to remain where we are for a while and peer around for movements…hm, looks like it should be fine.

"It's fine now, Minami. That inexplicable youkai living in modern times seems to have gone far away."

"Re, really?"

The timid Minami opens her eyes slightly.

It seems that this nurikabe is blocking a small room from the wall, and there's only Minami and me here. There's nothing to be scared of. This is likely designed to be some sort of rubbish dump or something as there are all sorts of broken stuff here. It looks to be a messy and dirty place.

"See, there isn't anyone else here, right?"

"Ye, yeah, that's great…"

Minami finally heaves a sigh of relief. It's really great that she can regain her composure.

Alright, what should we do next? Right now, we've already hidden ourselves just like what Yuuji instructed us, and it's about time to head back. Also, it'll be pitiful for Minami if she's to see more scary things.

"Let's go back, Minami."

Minami's summoned beast isn't a real object, so I step outside by passing through the nurikabe. But at this moment—

"Aki, hold on a moment."

For some reason, Minami's pulling my arm. What is it? Is there still a reason for us to hide here?

“What’s the matter, Minami? What happened?”

“…Let’s continue.”

A soft mutter reaches my ears.

“Continue…the topic just now. I want to be certain of things here.”

Eh? She wants me to continue…what we’re talking about just now? I remember…

“You’ll feel lonely because you view me as a friend, Aki? Or—”

“Eh? Mi, Minami, aren’t you getting too excited? Calm down first.”

“You always get the wrong ideas, Aki. I don’t like orangutans or chimpanzees or even sloths! You’ve always been mistaken. Actually, I really like—”

“You, you really like?”

“—Mo, mon…st! Hafuu!”

At that moment, Minami’s body lost all her strength as she collapsed onto the floor weakly. Maybe it’s because of the fear she experienced up till now that she can’t help but faint once she's relaxed.

“Really…she wouldn’t admit that she’s scared even though she’s terrified to such an extent.”

She already fainted, and yet she forces herself to say something like, ‘I like youkais’. Minami’s stubbornness is like a metal joint that won’t budge. If I have to say it, it’s really like Minami to protect her pride.

“Since Minami fainted, I better take her back first.”

I carry Minami’s lifeless body and turn back to where I came from.

“BAAK!!”

At this moment, some old props with faces and limbs are all moving on their own.

I get it. This place I thought was the dumps is actually a place full of demons. I actually brought Minami to hide here and sealed off the place with the nurikabe. I really made Minami suffer here.

“I’m back.”

I take note not to drop the unconscious Minami as I open the door to F classroom.

“Ohh, you’re finally back, Akihisa. Nicely done. This operation is very successful.”

Yuuji, who lifts his head from the tracking monitor, gives me a smirk. Operation successful? What does that mean?

“Eh? Why? Minami fainted out of fear. We came back without doing anything.”

“No, I’d dare say that you two did good.”

“…(Nods nods)”

“???”

Even Hideyoshi and Muttsurini are praising our performances, but I really have no idea what the situation is exactly about now. Anyway, I better let Minami lie on the tatami mat first.

“…”

As I put Minami down, Himeji-san gives me an ever serious stare.

“Hm? Himeji-san, is there something wrong?”

“Ah, no, it’s nothing at all.”

Himeji-san frantically waves her hands at me as she mutters ‘I should…summon up, some courage…’. Perhaps she finally decided to take part in the test of courage tournament.

“Akihisa, that act just now had some effects. See for yourself.”

“Hm? What is it?”

Since Yuuji says so, I hurriedly bring my face over to the monitor to look.

What appears on the screen is Kubo-kun and Shimizu-san, who somehow entered C classroom, and right now, they’re facing 2 3rd year-sempais.

(Hii…fuu…ONEE-SAMA I…WILL OFFER…SACRIFICES TO…ONEE-SAMA!!)

(…Hey, hey, is this, your summoned beast? It’s giving off a dangerous presence here…)

(No, that thing’s about the same as a human.)

That sempai’s right. Shimizu-san right now looks like an evil summoned beast that belonged to Kubo-kun and fell into a dark abyss as she has lost all signs of what a human should look like. If the opponent’s summoned beasts are as scary as her, all of us now will probably be screaming in fear and getting disqualified. Kids will definitely be getting nightmares for the entire summer vacation if they see Shimizu-san’s horrifying image.

(But that’s really unexpected. To think that there’s a boy who can break through Aoi’s point.)

(Aoi…? Ah, you’re talking about that sempai in kimono?)

(Un. You're not fettered by Aoi's charms…are you, someone who likes ugly people?)

(No, I don't like ugly ones, and I do understand that sempai charms.)

(Really?)

(Really, I used to like girls before.)

But I'm more concerned about Kubo-kun now.

(…Kill…you all…ugh…uu…onee-sama…)

(Sempai, we better hurry up and end this before Shimizu-san stops talking in human language—summon!)

(I feel that girl has lost a lot of things as a human…summon.)

(It, it seems that we'll get cursed if we don't end this…summon)

(…Summon…)

A class, Kotobuki Minato, Modern Language 289 points

And

A class, Nakasone Misao, Modern Language 227 points.

Are the end-of-terms questions hard? Or is the top class not exactly how it looks? I see two 3rd years with scores less than 300 points, and their summoned beasts are a yuki-onna and a harpy, normal monsters at that.

A class, Kubo Toshimitsu, Modern Language 388 points

And

D class, what was originally Shimizu Miharu, Modern Language 135 points.

On the second years side, there's a weird pairing; someone who lost his way in life, and someone who's just bothering me. Shimizu-san's eyes look like they're becoming like a youkai itself…speaking of which, Shimizu-san herself looks more like a youkai than anyone else.

"Can Kubo-kun's group win?"

"Well…this might be a tough battle, they should be able to do so."

Amongst the second years, Kubo-kun's grades are enough to make him top 3. It's too bad that he doesn't have a unique ability to let him pass the 400 point mark , but I think he'll definitely work hard to achieve this victory.

"Speaking of which, will the opposing yuki-onna do a snowstorm attack or something?"

Maybe this might become a battle of unique supernatural abilities like how Muttsurini's summoned beast can transform.

"No, I guess not. Only a few summoned beasts from before have this kind of ability."

"Some…"

"Only those monsters with more than 400 points."

"More than 400 points, huh…"

Muttsurini and Kudou-san's health education are more than 400 points, so they would have this kind of ability…however, can Kudou-san's be counted as a unique ability? This can really be debated.

"Speaking of this, this battle…"

"Will come down to beating each other blow for blow."

I'll say that the school better hurry up and fix the summoning system. Asking the

A class students to fight like that…is not going to get them motivated, let alone make them lose motivation.

(Minato! I'll deal with this boy. I'll leave that girl (?) to you!)

(You can't, Misao. That boy has higher scores! I should attack him since I have higher scores!)

(I, I don't want to! Tha, that girl doesn't look normal! Her eyes look like they'll eat someone!)

(I don't want to fight her too!)

"Our total points may not match the opponent, but looking at things now, I'll say that we're winning…"

"Yeah."

"I thought I saw Kubo-kun turn into a messenger of death that could control 3 demons at the same time…"

"…That's a real supernatural phenomenon."

"A, Akihisa-kun…something filthy is in this school! I think Shimizu-san is inflicted by it too!"

(Onee-sama, one-sama…Miharu's, beloved, onee-sama… why wouldn't…you even…look back…at me…)

Looking at Shimizu-san on the monitor now, I really worry how she's going to take the weird stares from her classmates in the future.

The Fifth Question

Yoshii Akihisa and Sakamoto Yuuji's real horror story introduction.

"Alright, I'm going to read the next mail then. This is from a person with the handle name 'A troubled little brother'."

"Really there, let's hope it's a scary one…"

"'Hello to both hosts for the first time. I want to let everyone hear about the horror experience I had.'"

"Oh, that's still a normal start. Hello there."

"'Actually, I have an older brother.'"

"Fm fm."

"'My brother is very serious, good at studies, and I feel very proud to have such a brother.'"

"Looks like that guy is a very good brother."

"'However, my brother suddenly changed completely once he came back from the school study camp.'"

"Changed? Is he possessed or something?"

"'He's always showing a happy expression, always talking excitedly and passionately about a certain male friend called the <Biggest Idiot in the School>.'"

"……Huh?"

"'My brother was so passionate it was weird, so I worriedly snuck into his room

to check…’”

“Ah…”

“‘In the end, I found a photo of a boy who should be of the same age as my brother in his drawer’”

“……”

“‘Ever since then, I've been terrified of staring at my brother’s face directly.’”

“……”

“‘I guess my brother accidentally stepped into a horrific world during the school study camp. Both of you, please be extra careful.’”

“……”

“The letter above is submitted by a person with the handle name 'Kubo Yoshimitsu’-san—no, from ‘a troubled little brother’.”

“I’m sorry…Kubo’s little brother…”

MIHARU DARKNESS

Kubo-kun and Shimizu-san (or whatever that is) make quick work of the two 3rd year sempai girls who're absolutely terrified, and C classroom is cleared safely, so A classroom is the only one left.

"Then, we'll win if Yuuji and Kirishima-san can safely break through A classroom."

"Yeah. They don't have many people with them, do they? A classroom doesn't look like it has any frightening traps. I'd say, Yuuji and Kirishima should be able to win easily."

Maybe it's because A classroom is so big (it's 6 times the size of D classroom) that there aren't many scary decorations around. There's only a maze made from the ample space and a few simple traps of summoned beasts appearing out of a sudden.

The effort the 3rd years put into A classroom is basically to build a maze that anyone will get lost in. It lacks the chilling feeling, and we do know what to expect through the tracking cameras' images, but it's not like it's not scary at all. Thus, the groups that went in after Kubo-kun and Shimizu-san are all disqualified.

(UWWAAHH!)

(KYAAAHHHH!!!!)

"…3 and 5, fail."

The screams can be heard from the monitors. They're all shocked by the monsters that pop out. However, this is just an ordinary situation that will happen in a test of courage tournament. Those students who were scared by the traps just now are now enjoying the fun that comes with it.

(I can't find it…where did those two go to? If we don't hurry up and find them, the bond between those two may be…ku…!)

(Where are you…onee-sama…where exactly are you…?)

Kubo-kun and Shimizu-san are at the intersection of the maze, widening their eyes as they seem to be looking for something. Right now, they look like shinigamis who are trying to find more people to drag along to hell.

“Yare yare, leaving aside Shimizu there, I didn’t expect Kubo to lose his normal composed decision making…they broke through the checkpoint. It’s about time for them to notice that there’s no one around in that classroom.”

“They’re probably panicking because they lost sight of Akihisa’s group.”

“…Love is blind.”

“Eh? I know Shimizu-san is looking for Minami, but why is Kubo-kun panicking?”

“““……”””

Uu…Shimizu-san does look anxious, so Kubo-kun’s accompanying her to look around? In that case, Kubo-kun’s really so kind.

“Ah! Or is it that Kubo-kun likes Shimizu-san?”

In that case, Muttsurini’s ‘love is blind’ explains things.

“Ahh…well, it’s true that they can’t remain calm because it involves people they like.”

“I’d say…why are you so slow…?”

That’s weird. Did everyone find out about it a long time ago? I did realize it today, so it can’t be helped if Hideyoshi’s scolding me for being slow.

“I see. In that case, I have to check with the person himself the next time. Actually, I really want to help him out.”

“Akihisa…how can you be so cruel…”

“Better give it up, Akihisa. You’ll make Kubo cry.”

“…That’s too much.”

“???”

Not good. I don’t understand what the three of them are saying at all.

(Where…where are they…hm? There seems to be light in front…)

(O, onee-sama…where…?)

“Hm? Looks like Kubo and Shimizu reached the checkpoint.”

“Ah, really.”

The monitor shows them walking out of the maze and appearing in front of a wide space. They deliberately set up lights to decide the winner, and it does look like this is the checkpoint of A classroom.

(Ohh, looks like you guys are here. You kept us waiting!)

(You’re the first pair to reach us. I’ll show you our abilities as 3rd years, so grit your teeth and die!)

The ones standing at the checkpoint are the two sempais, the familiar Mohawk and the crewcut, the Toko-Natsu pair. We can see a teacher from a corner of the monitor. This checkpoint is manned by Kimura-sensei, so it looks like they’re going to fight using physics.

(I’m sorry, but have Yoshii-kun and Shimada-san passed by here?)

(Hm? You are the first pair here.)

(Eh? Why did this…those two should be earlier than us…)

(It seems that Yoshii’s group snuck out midway through. I remember seeing it on

the monitor.)

(How, how can that be…then aren’t we just wasting our time here…?_

(Hm? I don’t know what are you talking about, but if you want to see them, you have to beat us before you can return back to your classroom—summon!)

(That’s how it is, hurry up. Summon!)

(Is that so…then, summon…)

(…Summon…)

Kubo-kun, who looks like he's lost a little motivation to fight, and Shimizu-san, who doesn’t look human anymore, are facing the Toko-Natsu pair as they summon their monsters.

“Can Kubo-kun’s group win?”

“Maybe not. Shimizu and Kubo should be stronger in humanities, so if they’re going to fight using physics…it’ll be rather hard.”

Yuuji probably investigated the grades of the other classes’ important members during the past few summoning wars, so that’s why he made this remark. Those who chose the sciences will be more interested in subjects like physics and chemistry, while most of those who are into humanities are more into biology[14] and geology. This is because there are different methods of studying them, to calculate or to memorize the content. Basically however, every subject for the 2nd years is necessary, so I think it’s not like Kubo-kun and Shimizu-san don’t have a complete chance of winning.

“The 3rd years are studying based on the exam format. That Toko-Natsu pair must be somewhat confident if they’ll choose physics as a deciding subject.

“Speaking of which…this might be a tough battle for Kubo-kun’s group.”

On a side note, unlike our 2nd year students’ learning format, the 3rd years can choose certain subjects (like physics, chemistry, biology, geology, geography, Japanese History, World History), so the rulings of carrying out summoning wars

for them seems to be a little different from us. They can change their subjects, like ‘physics for biology’ or ‘chemistry for geology’. Basically, these are the summoning rules designed for the central exams, and our overall points are roughly calculated through this set of rules…well, we don’t have to understand this level of technology too deeply.

“In other words, the reason why the subject used is Physics is because the Toko-Natsu pair are science based. Am I right?”

“That’s how it is. But of course, the opponent will choose a subject beneficial to them, just like who we would choose for health education.”

Because of the principal’s teaching directive, health education is a necessary subject all students need to study. However, many people will give up on that subject if it’s not tested during the central exams, let alone the 3rd years who are preparing for these central exams. However, the 2nd years do have super experts on health education, so this was actually beneficial to us.

On the other hand, the 3rd years have an advantage in chosen subjects like physics and geology. Unlike us, who have to study all the subjects, the 3rd years just need to focus on the subjects they’re specializing in. Even if they are humanities students, there’s no comparison between the 2nd years who have to study every subject and the 3rd years who can focus on a select few. Of course, the teachers may vary the difficulty level in response to this, but there are still differences in points. This is why the summoning wars carried out by each year has different rules, and thus, the subject for this abnormal matchup will be much more important.

A class, Kubo Toshimitsu, Physics 213 points

And

D class, what was originally Shimizu Miharu, Physics 71 points.

First, the 2nd years’ scores are shown.

As expected of Kubo-kun. He specializes in humanities, but is still able to get points that are above average for class 2-A. Even if it’s not at the extremely high

level of 400 or something, this level of battle ability is rather amazing. As for Shimizu-san…she doesn't seem to be particularly good in physics, and her points are comparable to mine.

"With their points, it'll be dangerous if our opponents here have more than 200 points."

"There should be no problems, right? Our opponents are the Toko-Natsu pair after all."

"Yeah. Yuuji really helped us out by taunting them."

"…Good foresight."

"Our opponents are 3rd years. It will be tough."

I hope Kubo-kun's group can try to wear out their fighting strength and let Yuuji and Kirishima-san finish them off.

During the previous battles, we fought using Japanese history during the summoning tournament, and there was the battle using world history before. The Toko-Natsu pair have points of around 200. In that case, even if physics is their best subject, I guess it will be around 250 points. In contrast, Yuuji and Kirishima-san will be—

A class, Tsunemura Yuusaku, Physics 412 points

And

A class, Natsukawa Shunpei, Physics 408 points.

""""WHAT!??""""

We're all so shocked that our exclamations are all in unison.

"Wai, wait a second! What's with those scores? Are the Toko-Natsu's scores that good?"

“Looking at such scores, they’re basically elite students in A class itself.”

“…Unbelievable.”

Even if these are the subjects they’re good at, these marks are way too high! The scores are really far apart compared to their other subjects!

“I didn’t expect this…it’s no wonder they accepted my taunt so easily. Those two already saw through my intention!”

The Toko-Natsu pair aren’t tense at all probably because they had expected our side to send Yuuji and Kirishima-san to deal with them. So that’s what they were planning. It’s really our mistake to underestimate our opponents…

(Alright then, try your best, kouhais.)

(You kept us waiting for long. Don’t get beaten in just a few hits.)

The Toko-Natsu pair’s summoned beasts are demons that aren’t any different from the controllers themselves, wielding metal rods. These summoned beasts give off an evil antagonistic presence, and this really fits them.

However, Kubo-kun and Shimizu-san have to find a way to fight them! I believe those two will give their all ((We admit defeat)) that’s too fast! The winner’s decided like this!?

“Kubo and Shimizu are unwilling to battle because of that conversation just now, is it? That must be the Toko-Natsu pair’s sure-fire move.”

“Well, that’s how it is. They were aiming for something else right from the beginning anyway.”

The monitor shows the opponents’ metal rods slam down viciously on Kubo-kun and Shimizu-san’s summoned beasts. Un. This difference in battle ability is really too great.

“What do you think, Yuuji? Do we have a chance of winning?”

“Un…in the best case scenario, I’ll say a 40% chance.”

“That’s really tough.”

We don’t even have a 50% chance of winning.

“Leaving aside Shouko, I have only 150 points for physics. Also, our opponents here have one more year of summoned beast control experience compared to us. They have the advantage both in terms of scores and experience.”

“In that case, shall we send some other team to wear down their strength?”

“…That’s tough as well. Including those who went in, we have only 4 pairs of fighting forces left.”

Muttsurini looks over at the name list as he answers my question.

Only 4 pairs left, 8 people altogether? If we don’t include Yuuji and Kirishima-san, there are 3 groups left. We don’t even know whether any group can keep themselves from screaming and getting to the final checkpoint in the first place either.

“…Just to mention it. One of the 4 groups is your group, Akihisa.”

“Eh? Me? Ah, that’s right. I’m not disqualified anyway, now that you mention it.”

I forgot all about it. We’re still not considered to be disqualified because Minami fainted out of fear, and didn’t scream out.

“But if Minami fainted, our group will not be able to provide any battle support.”

Even if I carry the unconscious Minami back into the battlefield, my physics alone can’t do anything. I can’t help but grimace at this.

“…(Shakes head)”

But Muttsurini actually shakes his head to answer my self-pity. Eh? Am I wrong?

“Akihisa, Muttsurini isn’t talking about your pairing with Shimada.”

“Eh? But isn’t Muttsurini talking about me…”

“Um, besides you, Yuuji and Kirishima, ain’t there someone else? There’s another great talent[15] who hasn’t been disqualified.”

Now that Hideyoshi mentions it, I look around at everyone present. Muttsurini is disqualified, Hideyoshi too, Yuuji’s a pair with Kirishima-san, and the one left is…”

“Are, are you talking about me…?”

Oh yeah! There’s still Himeji-san! Looks like she thought that she’s disqualified too because she’s too scared.

But even if she’s not disqualified, can Himeji-san really take part in this test of courage tournament? It’ll be too much if we force her to take part. Since Minami was so terrified despite taking the initiative, it’ll be too pitiful for Himeji-san here.

“Ah, ahh…I, I really can’t handle that kind of thing…”

Himeji-san mutters with utmost apology from the bottom of her heart. She must be troubled thinking that she can’t contribute to the team. Such a kind girl.

“So, well…I will end up causing Akihisa-kun lots of trouble…”

“Don’t worry about such things, Himeji-san. The punishment of losing isn’t anything great!”

“If possible…I, I want to take part in this with you too, Akihisa-kun…”

“You really don’t have to force yourself to take part—wait, ehh? Himeji-san, you’re really willing to go?”

“Ah, yes. If it doesn’t bother you, Akihisa-kun…”

“Why would I? I won’t feel bothered at all! I’ll be really welcoming of it too!”

I’m really happy here! Not because we got extra firepower, but because Himeji-san is willing to take part in this test of courage tournament.

It’s rare for everyone to experience this kind of activity. It’ll really be a pity if one only has the memory of ‘being terrified to death just by watching the monitor image in the classroom’. It doesn’t matter if we get disqualified by screaming the moment we step into the haunted house; the most important thing is that everyone can take part in this and laugh about it, saying things like ‘it’s really scary’ once everything’s over, and making wonderful memories of it. Thus, I’m really happy that Himeji-san is finally willing to take part in this.

“Is that so? So you finally decide to join, Himeji…yeah, you definitely won’t have a chance of winning after seeing Shimada and Akihisa like that. Now’s the time to summon your courage.”

“Sa, Sakamoto-kun! I’ll get angry if you continue!”

“Okay okay okay. I won’t say anything. I’ll just shut up, alright?”

Yuuji shows a sinister grin on his face.

I see. Minami’s passion in taking part despite being scared brought lots of courage to Himeji-san. It’s true that Minami’s hard work is really making my heart race. If I think about it this way, I can understand why Himeji-san would nod her head and agree.

“Le, let’s go, Akihisa-kun.”

“Un, you’re right. Let’s hurry up then!”

I better hurry before everyone realizes that Himeji-san and I are paired up and come for my throat.

“Right, I better get ready.”

“…Yuuji, you can hug onto me tightly if you’re scared.”

“I refuse. Also, please do whatever you want if you’re scared.”

“…Impossible. Those kinds of scary things scare me the most. I’ll definitely stick to you, Yuuji.”

“I’ll show you the expressions you make when you attack me next time. That’s a real demon.”

“…Kyaa, it’s so scary.”

“Uggooh!! My, my joints!?”

“…Cough, cough. Kyahh, kya…? Iya…?”

“You’re practicing your cries now? Damn it! I definitely won’t be tricked by you —GYAAAHHHH!!!”

“…I see. Gyaahhh, that…”

I can hear Yuuji and Kirishima-san’s conversation while I leave the classroom with Himeji-san. That Yuuji…I hope he won’t scream out in pain once his joints are restrained.

“A, Akihisa-kun…please don’t let go of my hand…”

“U, un, I get it.”

Himeji-san holds onto my hand tightly. I can’t let go even if I want to because of how she’s holding my hand.

In fact, Himeji-san has been sticking tightly to me ever since just now, causing me to sweat out of nervousness. I do feel embarrassed for being held by her so tightly…

“…It’s not scary, it’s not scary…I won’t feel scared as long as I’m with Akihisa-kun…”

But it seems that Himeji-san doesn't have the time to focus on such things. Or rather, I can't relax at all either. Himeji-san is being so close to me that I can't be bothered about whether those demons will scare me or not.

"Speaking of which, those monsters haven't appeared yet."

Himeji-san and I have just stepped into this classroom, but this is way too quiet. I remember that in C classroom, there would be 4,5 times the summoned beasts that would try to scare us. What's going on? Is it because A classroom is too big, and that there are too few summoned beasts available? Or are the 3rd years intending to carry out a terrifying act once we relax since we're all tensed up? The enemy must be thinking of using such a plan, like using "Akihisa-kun… (hugs)" soft meat buns, the squishy and soft feel and the smell to scare us. Even if we fail here, I'm already mentally prepared to live together with Himeji-san for eternity. In that case, I have to make sure I have my water supply, beat the Toko-Natsu pair, and finish my mission uboah!

"Ahh, that was dangerous…it's really dangerous now when this maze is so dark and so quiet…!"

"That, that's right…it's quiet and dark. It's really scary…"

"No, that's not it Himeji-san. I'm saying that it's dangerous, not scary."

"???"

I nearly became Yuuji's summoned beast (a werewolf). If I attack Himeji-san at this moment, she'll scream out of fear, causing us to get disqualified, and I'll be hated by her, beaten up by the other classmates, get expelled from school and get forcefully kissed by nee-san, leaving my life to be left with an endless darkness…dangerous! This situation's really dangerous!

"Well, Himeji-san…"

"Ye, yes?"

Anyway, I better speak up to break this silence first, or I may lose control of my sanity in such a silent moment. If I can talk, I might be able to divert Himeji-san's attention and not let her be so scared.

“Thank you very much for taking part in this activity even though you’re so scared.”

“Ah, don’t say that. I should be the one thanking you for being willing to pair up with me even though I might bring you lots of trouble, Akihisa-kun.”

“Why would I? I won’t feel troubled. I just feel happy inside to be able to take part in this with you. I don’t find this troublesome at all.”

“I’m happy to hear you say this.”

The fearful Himeji-san finishes her words, and breaks out a beautiful smile right at me.

“But you do feel rather scared, right?”

“We, well…ye, yes…I do feel scared…”

“There hasn’t been a single monster appearing, but this dim-looking maze is already scary enough without anyone around. Also, I have to endure the pressure of the summoned beasts appearing out of nowhere. It must be stressful for people who are scared of such things, I guess?

“Well…Akihisa-kun, I’m sorry…that I’m not athletic, and scared of such things, always relying on you to help me…”

“Ah, don’t worry. You really don’t have to apologize to me because of this.”

“But…”

Himeji-san still gives an apologetic look, and I can only open my mouth slowly and say.

“Himeji-san, even if you blame yourself for this…us guys don’t hate it when you can rely on us.”

“You don’t hate me…relying on you?”

“Un, because, for a, erm…cute girl like you, Himeji-san, any guy will be happy that you’re willing to work hard even though you’re scared, and how you rely on

me. I can only feel delighted that you will rely on me, Himeji-san, so why would I feel troubled?”

“Cu, cute, is it…hou…”

Himeji-san blushes as she lowers her head, and I feel awkward for saying such a foreign line, and my face feels like it’s going to blow out fire.

“About that…”

“U, hm? Is there anything you want to say, Himeji-san?”

“Well…do you feel happy to be with me, Akihisa-kun?”

That slender small hand holding onto mine is exerting more force.

“Of, of course I am! You’re cute and smart, and also kind too, Himeji-san. I basically can’t find any weaknesses in you, and I’m basically protecting a princess whenever I’m with you!”

“…Eh?”

I think I often hear people say that the name represents a person, and the ‘Hime’[16] in the name ‘Himeji Mizuki’ really suits her.

“But I guess the problem is about how you’re walking with a guy like me who’s stupid, doesn’t know how to fight, and is unreliable, Himeji-san—hm?”

Suddenly, Himeji-san pulls our hands that are held together.

“Did you say…princess?”

I turn my embarrassed face to the side to look at Himeji-san, and see her looking down sadly as she stops.

“What’s the matter, Himeji-san?”

“…There’s something…”

Himeji-san lets out a teeny-weeny voice.

“…There has been something…I wanted to ask you since a long time ago, Akihisa-kun…”

Something she wanted to ask me since a long time ago? What’s the matter? Looking at her expression now, it does seem to be something unhappy…did I accidentally mention something bad?

“Wha, what is it? Is there anything you want to say to me?”

“…Akihisa-kun…what do you…think about me…?”

“Eh?”

Why is Himeji-san saying this out of a sudden? What’s the situation now?

“That’s because…I’ve always been wondering, even though you’ve been treating me carefully like a princess, are you just trying to keep your distance away from me…”

“Keep my distance from you, Himeji-san?”

I don’t have that intention…do I?

“Because, Akihisa-kun…didn’t you just say it…that I’m like a ‘flawless princess’?”

“Ah, un, I did say it.”

“But I’m not! I’m not a princess at all! I’m always so slow-witted no matter what I do, and I’ll get jealous all the time. Even when everyone keeps praising me for doing well in schoolwork, I always pass out during the important exams, and my urge to have it all to myself…I have a lot of faults, and I keep causing trouble for others…”

“No, not at all…”

“That’s how it is! I have lots of weaknesses, but you don’t understand at all, Akihisa-kun. I think this is because there’s a wide gap between us…”

It’s not very loud, but Himeji-san does talk fast and rushed.

“Is it really weird for me to be walking with you like this, Akihisa-kun? To me… it really doesn’t suit me to be with this Akihisa-kun who’s cheery, kind, attractive and charismatic. But Akihisa-kun, you praise me so much and belittle yourself, so I feel that you’re trying to keep your distance away from me…”

I never thought that Himeji-san will ever say such a thing, and I don’t even know how to respond.

“Akihisa-kun, you’ve always been taking care of me…but the person who caught your eye isn’t really me, right?”

“…”

I can’t describe Himeji-san’s current expression now, either she’s trying to probe me, or she’s trying to rely on me.

I didn’t know that Himeji-san has always been troubled by such a thing…but I do feel that being isolated isn’t a good thing. The friends who often play with me are all close to me, but even I will feel unhappy if the way I’m being treated is different. Himeji-san has been conscious of her weak health, and so she’s more sensitive to how people react to her actions, I guess?

“Ah! So, sorry…for saying such weird things when you helped me a lot here…”

Himeji-san looks like she suddenly recovered after seeing that I’m utterly speechless. She doesn’t cling onto me now as she takes half a step back, and pulls the distance between us.

“Hi, Himeji-san, that…”

“Ple, please forget about what I just said. I just said that stupidly because I was too scared. It’s really nothing, sor—”

Himeji-san suddenly seems to remember something as she stares at my hand, unable to finish her words. What is she looking at—ah, this is bad! I forgot I’m still holding the camera! In that case, won’t Himeji-san’s words just now be heard?

“Eh, erm erm…that, I’m just thinking, maybe you might be shocked if I tell you my troubles, Akihisa-kun! Tha, that’s because…you don’t feel scared at all, right, Akihisa-kun? I wanted to scare you a little…”

“Ah, ahaha. I was really shocked by you. I nearly screamed out there and got disqualified, ahahahaha…”

We can only try to hide this. I don’t know whether Himeji-san’s words just now were real or not, but we have to put this aside for now. I can’t add on to Himeji-san’s troubles in this situation where everyone can hear us.

“It’ll be really scary if we don’t joke around a little in this situation, huh? Ahaha.”

“Really, your joke went overboard there, Himeji-san. Those who don’t know what’s going on will think you have an interest in me after hearing that, right?”

“Ah, no. About that…that’s not a joke…”

“No, not a joke? Yeah…it’s not the time to play a joke…”

“Ahhh, no! I’m not saying that this isn’t the time to play a joke…”

Himeji-san waves her hands flusteredly.

Anyway, it seems that our conversation has gone back to normal. In this situation, we better just laugh it off.

“Alright, let’s stop standing around here and chat. We have to move on.”

“Ah, you’re right. Sakamoto-kun’s group may be catching up soon.”

“But those jokes are rather interesting.”

“Ahaha. Ah, but the serious[17] thing I was talking about is true!”

“Eh…’heavy’ as in…”

Is it that part that’s developed exceptionally well compared to ordinary people?

“Ah…I, I’m not talking about the body, I’m talking about how my thoughts and

heart feels heavy. As for my weight…un…it, it's a little heavy…"

Himeji-san puts her hand on her stomach as she mutters.

Why are girls so mindful of their own weight? It's like many people really want the slender waist of a model, but I do find Himeji-san cuter than those girls that are too skinny.

"There's no need to worry about this! I don't find you pudgy at all."

"No, I'm really heavy. Whether it's in terms of weight or thoughts…"

In this aspect, Himeji-san is really a girl, unlike my sister who doesn't care about such trivial things at all.

"So…I've been concerned…you're so close to Minami-chan, but it's like you're keeping your distance away from me…"

"Hm? Himeji-san, did you just say something?"

"Nothing, I didn't say anything at all. Okay, let's keep going."

"Ah, Himeji-san, if you're so far away—"

"It, it's okay to keep this kind of distance! It's definitely because you're thinking for me so much if you're worried about such a small thing…!"

Once she said that, Himeji-san's small hand that was grabbing onto mine just lets go like that as she looks determined while moving off.

I don't really think that Himeji-san is fine now, but since she herself says so, I shouldn't be talking much about this. Besides, she must be concerned about the camera in my hand, I suppose? Or is it that she's not scared because there aren't any monsters coming out anymore? Either way, since Himeji-san's trying to get involved in the game, I shouldn't be obstructing her…but what's with this sense of helplessness?

"Speaking of which, we haven't seen one appear even after walking for so long…what's going on?"

We could only see the dim maze ever since the beginning. Is this part of the 3rd

years' plan? Do they think that my pairing with Himeji-san will fail right from the beginning? Or are the 3rd years planning to send all their forces to deal with the formidable opponents of Yuuji and Kirishima-san? However, I don't think they will be so foolish so as to think of sending more people to stop those two… in that case, there're other plans, right? The reason why they're leaving Himeji-san and me alone when we can be dealt with so easily…what is it?

Himeji-san's still quite some distance away from me, and I continue forward while having all sorts of doubts in my mind.

At this moment, I hear familiar sounding voices from the wall.

"…Yuuji, I'm scared. You should be sticking close to me."

"I refuse. I have to hold the camera too."

"…In that case, I have to do this."

"No, I don't mean that you have to help me hold the camera…"

"…But I'll be scared if you don't stick closely to me."

"Stop lying! Anyone can tell that you're not scared of this at all. Also, there hasn't been a monster appearing up till now."

"…In that case, let me change this."

"Hm? What do you want to say?"

"…If you don't stick to me tightly, something horrifying will happen to you, Yuuji."

"……(Tsukatsukatsukatsukatsuka)"

"…Yuuji, you won't run away."

"Stop joking around! Who wants to be killed by you here!"

Yuuji and Kirishima-san's conversation reaches my ears. Those two should be

very close to us because we're just separated by a wall. It's really great that they're still as amicable with each other as ever.

But there's something that concerns me.

"Hasn't anything happened to Yuuji's side…"

It's getting weirder and weirder. Even if those 3rd year sempais feel that I won't cause them much damage, it's too unnatural for them not to be wary of Yuuji and Kirishima-san. There must be a ploy in this.

As I'm thinking about this—

"…!?"

The lights that brightened this dim maze vanish.

"Eh? A, Akihisa-kun?"

Himeji-san's troubled voice is ringing nearby.

I want to get over to her immediately, but I can't move immediately if I don't have the lights guiding me. Damn it, I really shouldn't have let go of Himeji-san's hand and let her move off alone.

"Calm down first, Himeji-san. You should stay at where you are instead of moving around and wait for your eyes to get used to the darkness. Also, you should close your eyes so that you won't feel scared."

"Okay, I understand…"

I remain where I am once I reminded Himeji-san too as I wait for my eyes to get used to the darkness.

I let Himeji-san close her eyes because I fear that the summoned beasts will suddenly close in on her and scare her when the lights are lit. That should be the case.

It seems that there's a sound coming from somewhere in the darkness. Bring it… the 3rd years are finally making their move!

The weird noises nearby disappear, and my eyes are somewhat getting used to the darkness as I can vaguely see what's around me. Now, the most important thing is to get back to Himeji-san and calm her down.

"Eh? That's weird? Why's the road…"

I can't see clearly, but there's a wall that appeared between Himeji-san and me when we're 2, 3 steps away from each other…did the 3rd years change the panel layout of the maze during the time when we couldn't even see our fingers?

"This isn't good…! I have to get over to Himeji-san fast…!"

I frantically search around for a path. I'm still not disqualified yet if I'm alone, but it's pointless even if I get to the checkpoint if I'm not in a pair. Also, the most important thing is that it'll be really pitiful if I let the terrified Himeji-san be alone in such an environment.

While in the midst of the darkness, I reach my arm out to the space approximately 10cm in front of me. After walking for a while, I think I can sense the presence of someone else here, and hurriedly hold his hand. Great! I managed to find Himeji-san without taking too much time.

"Sorry, Himeji-san, you must be scared, right? But I guess you're—"

PAK (Lights are switched back on)

"—Ugly?"

"I'll kill you."

Standing right in front of me is the guy who's completely different from the endearing looking Himeji-san, Sakamoto Yuuji.

"Uu…it's already shocking to see your face when you just appeared in front of me like that, Yuuji. I really want to see Himeji-san now. This is really quite the trauma to me…"

"Shut up. Move your hand away from me. That's disgusting."

“Ah, sorry.”

I hurriedly let go of Yuuji’s hand, whom I mistook for someone else. It’s no wonder why I was wondering why Himeji-san’s hand got so thick and hard…

“Ah, now’s not the time for this. Yuuji, have you seen Himeji-san?”

“Nope, I didn’t see her.”

What should I do? Got to find her quickly!

“Alright, Yuuji. That’s how it is. I have to hurry up and find Himeji-san.”

“Wait, Akihisa.”

I turn around, only for Yuuji to suddenly call me.

“What is it? I’m anxious now!”

“I think you’ll just be wasting your efforts if you want to look for Himeji.”

What does he mean by that?

“We’re being toyed with by them now.”

“Eh? Why?”

Yuuji’s usual simple explanation causes me to have lots of questions. “Himeji and Shouko should have met already. Maybe we might hear screams later.”

“Himeji-san and Kirishima-san will scream after meeting? What do you mean?”

“This is the plan they thought of to deal with Shouko. Actually, there’s nothing surprising about it at all. Shouko’s scores are extremely outstanding, so if they want to make such a tough opponent get disqualified, there’s no need to deal with her directly. They just need to deal with her partner. However, it’s almost impossible for me to scream as Shouko’s partner, so they chose to switch our partners.”

“Eh? That means the 3rd years want to let Kirishima-san and Himeji-san be in the same group and attack them?”

Leaving aside what kind of ploy there is, Himeji-san should be alright if she's with Kirishima-san, right? On thinking about this, I can finally feel relieved.

"No, they may not be targeting Himeji. The 3rd years are aiming at those who might scream, whoever it may be."

"Whoever it may be, is it?"

"Weren't there quite a few groups who got lost and couldn't get out before we entered? I guess they weren't disqualified, but stuck inside and unable to get out."

"This…is to let Kirishima-san switch partners, is it?"

"Yeah. Our opponents have some form of understanding in regards to the numbers and type of people we have. They already guessed that Shouko and I will be the last pair, and deliberately left the first few teams to switch over when its necessary."

If Yuuji and Kirishima-san enter midway through the game, the 3rd years just need to make them switch partners while they're stuck in the maze and unable to get out. However, they can't do so if it's the last pair. That's why they deliberately left the first few teams.

"Eh? But even if they want to do so, aren't there quite a lot of uncertain aspects? They have to split us up if they want us to switch partners, don't they? Can the 3rd years really grasp the timing and do such a thing?"

"That's why they designed this maze. Those 3rd years will hide the path leading to the destination as long as the situation is beneficial to them, whether it's an extra wall, an extra path, or a rule not to break the passages. It's not impossible."

"Uwah, that's despicable…"

In other words, the 3rd years intend to trap us inside this maze until the situation is beneficial to them, don't they? In that case, it's not a mere accident that the lights went out when Himeji-san and I were slightly apart from each other, but because they already planned on the moment to split us up.

"Then why did Kubo-kun's pair get all the way to the checkpoint?"

“This is a cover to prevent their ploy for creating the maze from being revealed, I suppose? Also, they already had a rough idea on Kubo and Shimizu’s scores during the last checkpoint. Besides Kubo, Shimizu is just at D class level, and the Toko-Natsu won’t have to spend much effort dealing with them thanks to their control and summoned beasts scores. They’re much easier to deal with than Shouko and me.”

I see. Even if Kubo-kun and Shimizu-san’s pair managed to reach the checkpoint at the end without getting disqualified, we won’t suspect anything weird about it. Most probably, they already saw through this and carried out such a plan.

“Also, there’s the issue of wanting to reclaim their pride.”

“Ahh, that reason seems to be enough for them to do this.”

The Toko-Natsu pair’s physics scores aren’t just abnormally high. They must be rather concerned about not letting the kouhais think that their world history scores yesterday were their real abilities. Well…it’s like they want to show off their outstanding scores because they want to give this impression.

“Anyway, that’s how it is. We’ve been completely had by those two.”

“Is that so…but Yuuji, I feel that you’re really different today, aren’t you?”

“Nn? Really?”

“Yeah. Normally, you’ll think of a counterplan if you know that you’ve been had by the opponent, right, Yuuji?”

“Well, you’re right there.”

Yuuji’s just calmly explaining the current situation to me even after we’re being cornered so badly. This really isn’t like Yuuji.

“Did something happen?”

“Nothing.”

“Really? If there’s nothing, why aren’t you feeling bothered and thinking about a counterplan?”

“Because my objective is complete.”

“Objective?”

“That’s right. The reason why we had this tournament was originally to escape Ironman’s summer remedials. My objective was complete the moment this tournament was organized, whether we win or lose.”

“Oh, I see.”

“But it’s really vexing to lose to those two. And it’ll be troublesome to be in charge of the sports festival and clean up after it. If possible, I don’t want to take over this hot potato, so I’ll try my best to win this tournament.”

Now this is the Yuuji I know of. Since we escaped Ironman’s sobering hellish remedials, we’ll just be in charge of preparing the sports festival and cleaning up, but this kind of preparatory work is heaven compared to F class’ summer Iron-fist remedials. Also, the time taken to prepare for the sports festival will probably be overlapped with the time taken for lessons. In that case, even if we don’t have to do things for the 3rd years, we still have to face Ironman. If we can’t prepare using our free time, Ironman might suddenly add in after-class supplementary classes. Anyway, there’s not much difference between whether we win or we lose. Yuuji’s right in that in this current situation, the reason why we don’t like losing now is probably because we’re losing to the Toko-Natsu pair.

“This test of courage tournament is just a game. There’s no need to be so serious.”

Yuuji folds his arms and proudly nods at me. Even though he says so, it feels like he did seriously think when we were deciding on the rules.

“But it doesn’t sound like you want to admit defeat when you say this.”

“Gu…”

Arre? Did I guess correctly?

I lift my stare at Yuuji, and he immediately pretends to look calm as he says,

“Anyway, I did think of a plan for you and I to break through this current situation now…”

“Eh? You already have an idea?”

“But the most important part of that plan has to be done by you. I have to find a way to hold off the Toko-Natsu, and this really annoys me.”

“I see. So you’ll get jealous if I’m the only one who gets to show off?”

“I’m concerned that you can’t finish the job properly, you idiot.”

Yuuji retorts back unhappily.

I do feel that this strategy seems boring to Yuuji just by listening, especially when he has to hold off the Toko-Natsu pair.

“Never mind. That’s how it is anyway. We just need to watch how things go, so just leave Himeji to Shouko.”

“Is that so…but Himeji-san should feel a little more relaxed if Kirishima-san is around.”

Luckily, the ones holding the cameras this time are Kirishima-san and me, so we still have a camera each despite splitting up. Without the cameras, we'd have to return back to the classroom.

“Alright, Akihisa, let’s go.”

“Okay okay, I get it. Ah—to think that the person walking beside me has changed from Himeji-san to Yuuji; why must such a calamity happen to me…”

Just when I’m muttering unhappy, I suddenly realize something.

Nn? Wait a moment. Based on Yuuji’s explanation just now, it seems that he noticed their intention, so why did he allow himself to split up from Kirishima-san as according to the opponent’s plan? I already realized their intention and had a counterplan.

I don’t think it’s really possible, but maybe, this guy…

“Yuuji…did you purposely go according to what they wanted just to get away from Kirishima-san?”

“What are you saying, Akihisa? Our opponents are the 3rd year sempais. Isn’t it amazing for them to come up with such a plan? Also, it can’t be helped that our F class is rendered helpless in this intense battle of wits.”

“And your true thoughts?”

“I remembered the horrifying experience of being pursued with the nail-bat when I entered the haunted house with Shouko.”

Ah, this is due to the wedding experience I planned before.

“What the heck, Yuuji. You’re scared of taking part in this even though you sound really impressive here.”

“What nonsense. Those ghosts or youkais don’t scare me at all.”

“Ah. Kirishima-san is over at that corner.”

“Ku…! I can make it. Akihisa barrier[18]…!”

“I see what you’re scared of now, Yuuji.”

Also, Yuuji might use me as a shield if anything happens.

“Why are you so concerned about such a small matter, shie—Akihisa.”

“You submariner…! You nearly ended up calling me shield, right…?”

Yuuji’s the only person I’ll definitely not go to a real haunted house with.

“Speaking of which, it’s really weird.”

“The weird thing is your brain, Yuuji?”

“Shut up, you disposal armor plate. I’m saying that the weird thing is how we haven’t heard Himeji scream yet. Isn’t that weird?”

“Ah, that’s right.”

Yuuji and I had been chatting for quite a while. If the opponent's plan is successful, they should have scared Himeji-san already and make her scream…

As such a doubt pops up in my mind, a soft conversation can be heard from the wall.

"…Are you alright, Himeji?"

"Ye, yes…! I'm fine…! It's not scary…!"

"…These things are just summoned beasts with modified appearances. They aren't scary at all."

"Yes. That's right. They're not scary because they're summoned beasts…"

Aren't these Himeji-san and Kirishima-san's voices?

"Do you think they can hear us if we call their names?"

"Who knows? Maybe Himeji is trying to prevent herself from screaming and can't be bothered to notice our voices."

"Well, let's try that out first then. Oii, Himeji-san."

I deliberately keep my voice down to call Himeji-san on the other side of the wall so that I won't be deemed disqualified. Since we can hear their voices on the other side, I guess they should be able to hear my call, right?

"…!? I, I didn't hear anything...! There's no one else here. I definitely can't be hearing anyone here…"

"Better give it up here, Akihisa. This will bring about the opposite effect."

"Looks like it."

Himeji-san is trying so hard to fight her fear. It'll be sorry of me to scare her by

calling her now.

“But…Himeji’s really trying her best to endure even when she’s so scared.”

“Yeah. She’s probably used to how such summoned beasts are used to scare us, I guess?”

“What nonsense. Shimada’s as terrified as her and fainted already! Is it possible for her to go to such an extent when she’s *used* to this?”

“Yeah, seems like you’re right?”

It is like what Yuuji said. Fear comes from within, and isn’t something that can be conquered psychologically in such a short while. It’s like someone with acrophobia getting used to standing at a high place. It’s basically impossible.

“Be honest with me, Akihisa, did something happen when you two were alone?”

“Eh? U…n…now that you mention it, something did seem to happen…”

If I have to say what happened, it’s probably about the conversation between Himeji-san and me. Himeji-san’s troubles are like…how I deliberately try to keep my distance from her, how I seem distant to her. However, this isn’t something that can be freely discussed with others…

Yuuji sees that I choose to remain silent and not explain further, he suddenly walks over and whispers to me so softly the camera can’t record it.

(Actually, I did hear a little of what you two were talking about. Didn’t Himeji say something about being worried about something and keeping distance or sorts?)

Oh yeah. Just like how I overheard Yuuji and Kirishima-san’s conversation, Yuuji who’s standing on the other side of that wall should be able to hear our voices.

(Un…yeah. It seems that Himeji-san has lots of troubles.)

(Looks like it. I already talked to Himeji about that before.)

(Eh?)

(Don’t be mistaken. I only chatted with her about this as a friend in an indirect manner.)

So Himeji-san does feel bothered for feeling isolated…

(That’s why Himeji is working hard in her own way.)

(Work hard?)

(She’s working hard to be a friend who can be relied upon so that we can be closer together. She feels that she’s always being helped, and she’s rather bothered by this.)

(Speaking of which, it seems that we talked about something similar before.)

I remember it was after that summoning war or something. At that time, Himeji-san once said at the park that ‘during the summoning battle, and it was the same this time. I'm always getting helped by others’, or something.

(But I feel that she doesn’t have to be bothered by such a small thing.)

(Even if you say so, Himeji may not have the same idea as you. That’s because of her nature itself.)

(Really…I guess you’re right.)

I don’t feel that I’ve always been helping Himeji-san in a one-sided manner, like how she often teaches me, how she tries to assist me during the summoning war, and how she often supports me; she does support me in lots of ways. However, it’s pointless for us to try and coax her if she still feels guilty, isn’t it?

If Himeji-san can’t feel relieved, there will be a heavy burden that she will never be able to let go. Now is the best chance to let Himeji-san work hard and abandon all the shackles in her heart. So I shouldn’t step in to help; I just need to support her from the shadows.

(Also, if Himeji is willing to work hard, it’s not just a dream for us to win this.)

(That’s right. It’ll be great if she can showcase her ability here.)

I just hope Himeji-san can work hard to overcome this, whether it’s for herself or for us.

“OGAAA—!!”

“Uuu…! U…!”

“…Don’t be scared Himeji. These things aren’t scary at all. They’re fake.”

“Ye, yes! I’m alright…I’ll do my best…!”

The echo already has some sobbing in it, but she’s still trying to hold it in. Himeji-san right now is really moving me from the bottom of my heart now. Himeji-san, please do your best…!

“We should be moving forward now. Since you’re so worried, let’s head over to where Shouko’s group is. However, don’t reach the checkpoint before them.”

“Un.”

I follow what Yuuji said and move forward to where Himeji-san’s group is moving to. Looking at the alignment of the classroom, we should be nearer to the checkpoint.”

“Oi oi…that girl’s really worrying hard.”

“I think once more should be enough, but she has her eyes closed now. We have to find the moment to scare her.”

“Got it. Then, let’s begin…summon.”

We hear this suppressed conversation going on as we follow Himeji-san’s group. The sempais in charge of scaring seem to be hiding somewhere, watching the tracking images and waiting for a timely strike.

“I HATE…I…”

“—U! —U! It’s alright…I’m not scared at all…”

“…You’re a good girl, Himeji.”

I can tell from the voices that Himeji-san is trying to resist a seemingly scary looking summoned beast. I’m really happy that she’s working so hard to reduce the distance between us. I really feel proud to be friends with such an outstanding girl.

“Onee-sama look at me look over at me…”

“Hauu…! Uuu…! I’m just hallucinating, I’m just thinking too much…”

“…Onee-chan’s busy now. Talk again next time.”

I can sense that Himeji-san is working hard, and really pray that she can get her rewards for her hard work, and get to the checkpoint safely to beat the Toko-Natsu—even if they can’t crush them, I hope that she can try to wear out their battle ability and help us out as allies. Then, Himeji-san might feel some sense of importance in her.

Do your best…Do your best, Himeji-san…!

“—Hisa. Akihisa.”

“Do your best, do your best…!”

“Are you even listening to me, you big idiot!?”

“—!”

My, my foot seems like it’s going to get squashed. This pain is really…Yuuji’s using a method of torture that won’t cause me to scream, but this pain is torturing me!

“Wha, what? Yuuji?”

“The front’s sealed off. We can’t get across.”

“Hm? Where?”

Now that Yuuji mentions this, I finally notice the situation in front of us. I’ve been focusing so much on encouraging Himeji-san secretly that I forgot to notice the surroundings.

“Ahh, but there seems to be a shadow in front. Maybe there’s another way around?”

“Really?”

“Anyway, let’s take a look first.”

“Alright.”

We continue moving on towards that path that looks like there’s no way through.

“But that’s rather weird. Why haven’t we seen a summoned beast at all?”

“Yeah. Well, they probably thought that they could immediately deal with Himeji, but didn’t expect her to be so hard to handle, so they could only send everyone to scare her? Anyway, it’ll be much easier than dealing with us since we won’t be screaming.”

“I see…but Himeji-san will have it tougher.”

“Also, it seems that Toko-Natsu wants to challenge us no matter what.”

“Un. That’s really just like what they will think.”

Looks like Yuuji and I really offended those two unintentionally. That’s why the Toko-Natsu want to beat us in front of everyone to avenge this.

“Even if they have such useless thoughts, it’s meaningless as long as Himeji-san and Kirishima-san manage to break through the last checkpoint successfully—nn?”

“What is it, Akihisa?”

“Nothing. I think I just saw the road in front disappear…”

“What? They changed the layout of the obstacles in the maze again?”

I stare at the walls in front of me, and suddenly realize that there’s a gap right between the walls, as if they were moved. It seems that the wall that was used to block a certain place was moved aside.

“…Himeji.”

“Ah, yes. What is it?”

“…This is probably where the last checkpoint is.”

“Eh?”

“Gek! Tsunemura? Why aren’t those two disqualified!? What should we do now?”

“You’re asking me how…we can only fight them head on now!”

Besides Himeji-san and Kirishima-san’s voices, I can also hear the Toko-Natsu pair voices. In that case, the final destination is right in front. Himeji-san’s group is soon going to succeed.

“Ohh. Looks like they reached their objective. Himeji really worked hard there.”

“That’s great…that’s really great…”

I’m so happy that my voice is inadvertently trembling.

“It’s their fault for showing an opening accidentally when they were trying to stop us, and Shouko found the endpoint as a result. There’s no worse situation than now for those 3rd years.”

“Because Himeji-san worked so hard this time.”

What's left is a lot simpler, they just need to challenge the Toko-Natsu. They just need to try and attack them, no matter the outcome. This isn't too much of a problem to Himeji-san and Kirishima-san who have taken part in lots of summoning battles.

"Seriously…two girls pop up to mess things up before we can even teach that Yoshii and Sakamoto a lesson. Whose fault is it here!"

"These two girls are harder to deal with than those two scum."

"Ahh~ who was the one who said at first that the 2nd years are all idiots and pushovers and that we can beat them easily?"

"Sorry, allow me to correct myself. Yoshii and Sakamoto are scum, but there are some serious guys amongst the 2nd years, and we have to watch out for them. You happy?"

"It's too late to say this kind of thing. Yare yare…is this called the swans amongst the ugly ducklings? It's really a waste for those two beautiful girls to mix around with those useless trash."

I can clearly hear the Toko-Natsu's conversation from behind the wall.

"Yuuji, you've been scolded."

"I can't argue back about you being viewed as trash and scum, but I really didn't expect my name to be lumped with yours."

"Nope, it's definitely because you're so stupid that even I got involved and viewed as an idiot. I'm the victim here."

"What nonsense are you spouting, Akihisa? Who can be more trashworthy than you?"

"No no no, Yuuji, you don't have to be so humble. You're not like this smart me; your trash level can be ranked the highest in the world."

""…!!(Grabbing each other by the collars)""

We continue to check on the situation around us as Yuuji and I glare at each other.

While we're arguing with each other, we hope that Himeji-san's group won't talk with those two damned submariners and settle this quickly.

"It's because this school has that kind of trash that we—"

"…Yuuji and the rest, aren't trash."

"—Ah?"

"…Yuuji and the rest aren't trash."

"Even if you want to defend them, facts are facts. Those two guys will attract the teachers' attention by wrecking things, don't even have contributions taking part in club activities, and have atrocious grades. What can we call them other than trash?"

I really want to say something, but I can't argue about that. If I have to say, I can only make the argument of 'I don't want you of all people saying this about me'.

"It's really vexing to have those two say that about us, but they're likely saying the truth here."

"Because we did all sorts of stupid stunts."

Let's not mention about that peeping incident caused by every guy's fantasy; those upright students wouldn't have bombed the school repeatedly.

"Seriously, those two are really the black marks in our school. If they want to cause trouble to others, they should just stay in the trash treatment."

Looks like they really hate us as one of the Toko-Natsu is rattling on.

As Yuuji and I can only shake our heads and shrug.

“WHY MUST YOU SAY SUCH TERRIBLE THINGS!!”

That’s a voice we can hear loud and clear. A shout came from the other side. The one speaking is…Himeji-san?

“WHAT, WHAT’S WITH YOU!? ANYTHING YOU’RE UNHAPPY WITH!?”

“MAYBE IT’S JUST LIKE WHAT YOU SAY, THAT YOSHII-KUN AND SAKAMOTO-KUN’S GRADES AREN’T GOOD, AND A LOT OF INCIDENTS HAPPENED…BUT EVEN YOU, WHY MUST YOU SAY SUCH TERRIBLE THINGS! YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND THEM AT ALL…YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND HOW AKIHISA-KUN AND THE REST ARE ALL NICE GUYS! YOU DON’T KNOW WHY THEY’RE CAUSING THE TROUBLES IN THE FIRST PLACE!”

“YOU’RE SO NOISY! DON’T YOU KNOW HOW STUPID THOSE TWO GUYS ARE? JUST LOOK AT THEIR GRADES AND YOU CAN, CAN'T YOU!”

“WHY MUST YOU DETERMINE A PERSON’S WORTH BASED ON GRADES OR MATH!? THERE’S A LOT OF THINGS THAT CAN’T BE EXPRESSED IN POINTS…!”

Himeji-san’s shouts are filled with sobbing, an emotion that’s strong and can’t be ignored.

“STOP YAPPING AWAY OVER THERE! WHO WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT THOSE TWO TRASH!?”

“AKIHISA-KUN AND THE REST AREN’T TRASH LIKE YOU SAY!”

“ALRIGHT, YOU CAN SCRAM! OI, TSUNEMURA, THIS GIRL’S LOUD ENOUGH TO BE DISQUALIFIED, RIGHT?”

“Un, you’re right. We’re really lucky.”

“THAT’S HOW IT IS! NOW SCRAM!”

“…We don’t need to be reminded by you. We don’t want to keep looking at your ugly faces anyway. Let’s go, Himeji.”

“……Yes.”

Himeji-san and Kirishima-san’s presence are moving far away. They worked so hard and finally reached the final checkpoint. It’s really a pity.

“Yuuji, did you hear what Himeji-san just said? We seem to be kind, friendly people to her.”

“This is the first time I’m hearing this too. I’m not as bad as you, but I do feel that I’m a complete trash.”

“Yeah. I’m not as bad as you, Yuuji, but I do realize that I’m more or less useless.”

Speaking of which, our class is basically made up of useless people.

“Seriously, it’s a pity for Himeji-san. Making it all the way here after much hardship, and wasting all our efforts.”

“Yeah. There’s no need to be so agitated over this game. It’s really a waste.”

“Yeah.”

It’s really a pity. She did grit her teeth and make it all the way here with much difficulty.

“We should go, Akihisa.”

“Un. Sorry, Yuuji.”

“You’re owing me more favors now.”

We walk off to the final checkpoint where the Toko-Natsu pair is.

This test of courage tournament is just a game. There’s no need to be so incensed by this.

However—

OBAKECHOUCHIN

“We’re going to get serious from now on, you damned submariners.”

The Sixth Question

Please read the following passage and answer the question.

“Where did Sadakichi go?”

Jihei asks, and Tasuke shrugs as he answers,

“To Okiku. He wants to express his 10 years of love to her with his self-proclaimed specialty of Poetry[19].”

After hearing Tasuke’s words, Jihei cannot help but frown,

“He wants to touch her heart by singing a love poem? I can already guess the *outcome*.”

“Yeah. Blame that guy for being ‘____’ despite being so bad at it’.

Question 1: Please fill in the common saying in the blank with the correct answer and explain its meaning.

Question 2: What is the ‘outcome’ highlighted in the text? Please write down the outcome Jihei and Tasuke’s expects.

Himeji Mizuki's Answer:

1: ‘<passionate> despite being so bad at it

It means that he does not know he is bad at it, but is extremely passionate about it.

2: Sadakichi’s singing is really bad, so the expected result is that he will not get

the girl.

Teacher's Comment:

Correct answer. This common sentence structure ‘despite being bad…’ has other forms of usage, like ‘act like he is good at it’. Either sentence can be used to describe that the person is actually rather bad in some things, and from this, we know that Jihei and Tasuke expect Sadakichi to fail.

Yoshii Akihisa's answer:

1: ‘<stubborn> despite being so bad at it

It means that he will work hard for something no matter how stupid it may look

2: Sadakichi may be bad at singing, but Jihei and Tasuke expect that he will get Okiku's heart after seeing him work so hard to sing.

Teacher's Comment:

This answer cannot be considered the correct one, but sensei here does not hate it either.

AKIHISA YOSHII

“Yo, sempais, kept you waiting.”

“You’re too slow already, Sakamoto. The kouhais actually made us sempais wait.”

“Sorry about that. We had to deal with some unexpected happenings, so we came late. I suppose your time is rather precious since you’re so busy everyday, sempais.”

“Of course! We 3rd years are unlike you stupid guys with rotten brains.”

Yuuji and I step into the final checkpoint, and the Toko-Natsu pair are giving us sneers. That’s a relaxed expression shown only when they think they’re at an advantage.

However, it’s obvious why they would be so relaxed. Their physics scores are tops amongst the best class in their year, and actually broke through the 400 point marks. In contrast, Yuuji doesn’t even have 200 points for physics, and I don’t even have 70. Anyone will feel that we’re at a disadvantage here.

“Speaking of which, didn’t you guys say that you want to go ‘one-on-one’ yesterday? You should be ready to bet on something, right?”

The crewcut-sempai gives a taunting look at Yuuji and me, seemingly certain of his victory. The Mohawk behind him (Tsunemura) is cackling viciously , seemingly thinking that we never thought of betting in this straight up duel. Or are they thinking that Yuuji and I will go back on our deal or even tell us off badly. Are they thinking that way?

“You can if you don’t want...but you have to kneel down and ad—”

“Alright, we agreed to it anyway. Let’s have a punishment game for this duel.”

““NAR!?””

I grin as I answer, and the Toko-Natsu pair give a weird cry in response to this unexpected answer.

“Is, is that so? Since you guys say so, so be it!”

“It’s decided then. What punishment will the loser get?”

“Well…how about ‘the loser has to agree to whatever the winner asks for’?”

““Wha, what are you saying…?””

The Toko-Natsu’s expressions change drastically. They probably never thought that I would dare to say such things.

“What twisted plan are you thinking about here…?”

“Aren’t you being too confident here?”

“What do you say?”

“This should have something to do with the camera Sakamoto just used to get someone in the classroom to ‘call the world history teacher over here’, shouldn't it?”

Oh, so those two did notice the footage caught by the camera.

“Well, don’t think so much, sempai. The summoning system has been rather weird recently, so calling in the world history teacher is just a matter of precaution.”

Yuuji waves his hand as he answers,

“…Well, never mind. We don’t know what plan you guys are scheming, but you’re just trying some petty tricks. Let’s begin—summon!”

“We’ll definitely send you crying for your mommies. Summon!”

The Toko-Natsu glance aside to check that the physics teacher Kimura-sensei is still around before calling out their summoned beasts.

After calling out, the pattern arrays appear like usual—

“What? What’s going on? Why isn’t anything showing up?”

“What the heck is this? What’s going on?”

The pattern arrays never appear, and of course, the Toko-Natsu's summoned beasts never appeared.

"Oya, that's really weird. Did the system really malfunction?"

Kimura-sensei, who's standing not too far away, tilts his head as he says,

"Don't worry, sensei. There's a little mishap, but it seems that it's just for physics. It can't be helped then. Let me use the history teacher I called in for *precaution's sake* to decide this duel."

"What? Sakamoto, you bastard…"

"Hm? Do you still have any problems, sempais? Aren't you rushing around because you're so busy? It'll be really sorry on our part if you have to waste time waiting for another subject's teacher to arrive. Ah, looks like the world history teacher has arrived."

"You two bastards…you must have done something, right!?"

Yuuji's attitude of treating others like idiots is turning Tsunemura-sempai red with anger.

"Relax sempais. We're switching subjects, but I won't call out my summoned beast. This is your battle with Akihisa, and your advantageous situation hasn't changed."

Yuuji's stare turns towards the physics teacher Kimura-sensei.

I suppose there's no need for me to explain it here, do I? As what our opponents said, this is all Yuuji's strategy.

Instead of challenging the sempais to a duel in physics, when Yuuji and my scores won't even reach one-third of their total scores, we might as well challenge them to a duel of world history, where our scores are more similar. For this, Yuuji used his platinum bracelet and caused an 'interference' to negate the physics summoning field.

"You bastard, how did you…"

“Didn’t I say that I won’t be taking part? You’ll only be facing Akihisa, so there’s no need to be so scared, right? Sempais? Or are you scared of fighting us 2 on 1 if it’s not your specialty subject even if it’s against us trashy opponents?”

“…Damned bastard…!”

Once he creates the summoning field, Yuuji won’t be able to carry out a summoning. In other words, this duel has to be done by me against the Toko-Natsu pair. However, even if we do so, the differences in our scores will go from 3:1 down to 2:1. It’s slightly easier, but the fact still remains that we’re disadvantaged.

“Just what I wanted! Since you dare to say so, bring it on! Don’t forget our wager!”

“You guys shouldn’t be forgetting, damn you! Sensei…!”

“Ahh, yes yes, I get it.”

Once Yuuji calls out, the world history teacher who was called out at the last minute, Tanaka-sensei, grants us the permission to fight. I thought the physics teacher Kimura-sensei would interfere with this, but he doesn’t do anything here, so things are still going according to Yuuji’s plan.

“““Summon.“”””

The Toko-Natsu and my summoning call echo.

This time, the summoning is different from before as the patterned arrays appear in front of us. Soon after, summoned beasts that are different from the cute versions before appear in the middle of these arrays.

A class, Tsunemura Yuusaku, World History 144 points

And

A class, Natsukawa Shunpei, World History, 135 points.

What appeared from the Toko-Natsu pair's summon are the Gozu and Mezu we saw before. Unlike the physics battle we saw from the monitor before, they aren't wearing the golden bracelet now.

F class, Yoshii Akihisa, World history 123 points.

My summoned beast is the Dullahan with the head tucked under the armpit, its right hand waving the heavy sword. If I have to say what its greatest weakness, it's the head tucked between the left arm and the body.

"So we're left with the year's average…looks like we lost quite a bit of points over here. The prelude battle yesterday could be avoided."

"Tch, all because we were sent flying by that bespectacled guy…"

The Toko-Natsu pair had a battle against Kubo-kun and me yesterday. Because of the attacks we landed on each other, both of us lost quite a few points. Their summoned beasts were sent flying by Kubo-kun's summoned beast, and I was beaten by that crewcut-sempai such that my score dropped to the year's average. However, I have to thank Kubo-kun. If he hadn't helped me back then, the situation now would definitely be tougher.

"Alright, Yoshii. It's time for us to put an end to this battle. You guys wanted to change the subjects, so don't call us despicable for going 2 on 1."

The crewcut-sempai (Natsukawa) Gozu waves the hammer in its hand and attacks me. I definitely won't be able to dodge or take this hit if it were physics, but I'm no longer in a situation where I'm taking a beating after this change of subject.

"Woah…!"

I straighten my body at the fastest speed possible and slam the weapon in my hand hard. The opponent does the same thing in response, and our swords clash. In fact, my dullahan's power will increase the less I have to move. If I don't move too much, I can put the head on its neck, and I can use both hands freely.

"Gu…u…!"

It’s a back and forth battle of strength, and after clashing for a while, I can hear the crewcut-sempai groan. If this continues, we can make them lose balance—but the opponent’s no easy prey.

“…Uwah!”

The Mezu that was standing beside Gozu suddenly attacks me. The Gozu immediately uses its body to slam the Dullahan without a further thought.

The Dullahan hasn’t landed as the Gozu raises its hammer to strike. I use the sword as a shield to block the Gozu’s attack head on, but my pitiful summoned beast that was sent flying is still blown far away.

“Not—good…!”

As I was sent flying away, the Dullahan’s head breaks away from its body.

The hands that were left empty hurriedly grab the head that was separated. I barely managed to protect my weakness, but I can’t avoid the damage that’s caused when it landed.

“Looks like you have quite some reflexes besides barking there, Yoshii!”

Gozu and Mezu wield their weapons as they close in on me while I’m defenseless. I can’t dodge if they attack me at the same time…!

“…!”

While panicking, I hurriedly let my summoned beast barge between the two opponents that are rushing over. The Gozu and Mezu can only clash their weapons with each other, and are unable to attack.

“Looking down on us!?”

Gozu swings down the hammer in its hand, seemingly trying to push the Mezu aside. This sudden attack nearly lands on me.

“Calm down, Natsukawa! This is different from the summoned beasts we’re used to controlling. I think it’s better for us to keep our distance.”

“I got it!”

Gozu and Mezu wave their own weapons and pull to a safe distance. It seems that this move can’t work anymore. Besides, I don’t want to end up in that situation of near life and death again even after managing to dodge it.

I warily watch the opponents’ movements as I pull my distance, watching out for any back attacks as I stare back at them.

At this moment, the crewcut-sempai suddenly shouts out to Yuuji, who’s watching this with his arms folded.

“Oi, Sakamoto!”

“What? You’re rather relaxed to be able to focus on me at this moment, sempai!”

“Of course I am! This idiot Yoshii can’t possibly beat us, right?”

The crewcut-sempai has further belief that he has the advantage after that clash just now, so now, he’s focusing on Yuuji.

“Forget about that, huh? How about we fight using physics? Then you can take part too, right? Or else this duel’s too boring.”

They rather use the subject they have an absolute advantage in to beat Yuuji and me instead of beating me alone with a subject they’re not good at? That crewcut-sempai’s taunting Yuuji as he says this.

However, Yuuji merely snorts as he heartily denies the crewcut-sempai’s proposal.

“How stupid. I just want to stand here and watch. I want to see how you elite rubbish sempais who called us trash get massacred!”

“Damn you, what did you say!”

At this moment, the crewcut-sempai is completely focused on Yuuji. This taunt is brilliant,

—If I want to strike back, now’s the only chance!

“Double!”

I say out this keyword, and the platinum bracelet is activated and another summoned beast appears as well.

The summoned beast appears, and attacks one of the opponents’ summoned beasts together with the main beast that has the head tucked under the armpit. The target is the Mezu the Mohawk-sempai has. I intend to use the focused strength of the main and sub beasts to beat Mezu and fight Gozu one on one.

“Urk!”

Mezu raises its spear to block the sword of the main beast that swung down, but the sub beast has already raised its sword as it aims for the side, and it’s impossible for the Mezu to dodge.

“Too weak!”

“—!”

Just when I’m ready to attack, Gozu, which was charging at the Dullahan, slams into it, interrupting the attack.

Ku…! He’s not distracted by Yuuji’s taunt?

“Sorry to disappoint you. Did you think we forgot the existence of the platinum bracelet?”

“Who do you think fought against you in that final during the summoning tournament?”

The Toko-Natsu pair boastingly stare at Yuuji and me…did the sudden attack fail?

“Let us tell you guys this. We have our prides as seniors!”

“Even if it’s not the subject we’re good at, it’s not interesting for us to have 2 people fight 1. You should know why that is, right?”

Are they still unhappy even though they feel the conditions are advantageous to

them? Because they know I will call out two summoned beasts to fight against them?

“Do you still intend to just watch when things are like this now, Sakamoto?”

The crewcut-sempai gives Yuuji a smirk as he asks.

Our surprise attack failed, and he probably thinks that the fact that our side is disadvantaged hasn’t changed, right?

It’s true that even if I call out two summoned beasts, the situation will not just become advantageous to us like that.

“No matter which side I attack, it will just cause damage to both summoned beasts, right? Once the first attack missed, it ended up bringing another attack target for us, so we’ll have to thank you about it.”

“If Yoshii has to control two summoned beasts alone, we just need to increase our attack speed so that he can’t respond.”

The Toko-Natsu pair are right. No matter which summoned beast they attack, I have to find a way to dodge. If not, both summoned beasts I control will be damaged as well.

“What do you intend to do, Sakamoto?”

Looks like they insist on dragging Yuuji into this battle. That’s why crewcut-sempai is prompting Yuuji, who’s outside the battlefield.

However—

“I don’t intend to do anything. Akihisa’s the one fighting you guys. Didn’t I say that I’ll just be watching?”

Yuuji remains unmoved as he takes a step back, firmly showing that he’ll just be watching this battle.

“Seriously…I was wrong about you. You really don’t want to let everyone see you suffer utter defeat?”

“Even if you’re not willing to battle, it’ll be your loss once Yoshii loses. You should be clear about that, right?”

“There’s no need to remind me about that. I do understand that well. However—is it really alright for you guys to keep chatting with me?”

“Nn—UOOHHH!”

The Gozu the crewcut-sempai’s controlling hurriedly raises its hammer to parry the Dullahan’s incoming sword away at the last moment, but the Mezu beside it is attacked by the sub beast and sent flying.

“You have guts, Yoshii! If you want to keep fighting, we’ll gladly accompany you!”

“Don’t regret this!”

Gozu and Mezu attack me in different directions. The Gozu aims for the main beast, while the Mezu aims for the sub beast at the same time.

However, the main beast had already stepped forward before the hammer in Gozu’s hands was raised to the highest point. It nimbly stabs out the broadsword while taking advantage of the opening right between the moments the Gozu raises its weapon and strikes down. Gozu can only frantically move its body aside to dodge the main beast’s attack.

On the other hand, the sub beast assumes a defensive position, putting the broadsword in front as it parries the spear away. Mezu stabs out its spear to avoid my attack, but it’s a lot easier to dodge this limited attack, and the metal gauntlets push the spear grip from the side to dodge.

“Tch! How long are you going to keep up with such annoying and weak attacks?”

“Go to hell!”

I slightly duck down to avoid the flying kick at the main beast, and use the sword to push aside the attack aimed for the side attack. The main beast doesn’t have time to swing its sword, so it can only kneel down on its knees to pull its distance and swing the sword with all its strength. I just need to focus on the sub

beast and use the sword to block the opponent's spear attack. It seems that the Toko-Natsu pair are all very insistent on using weapons to attack, so in that case, I should be able to block them all.

"Damn it…you bastard!"

"How annoying!"

I try my best to duck as I face the rushing Gozu, and keep using the sharp blade to attack its legs with small and quick movements. It seems that the Mezu wants to attack the head the sub beast's left hand is holding, so I reach my right arm forward in a defensive position and wave the broadsword at the opening the opponent hasn't guarded well.

This small-scale skirmish that can't deal fatal blows to the opponent continues for a while,

"Tsunemura, force those two together!"

"Got it!"

The crewcut-sempai is annoyed by this situation that's going nowhere as he commands the Mohawk-sempai.

Gozu and Mezu use their weapons as shields as they charge over in a tacit manner as they force my main and sub beasts to the same place. I guess this plan is to make me confused, and they're trying to close the distance so that I'll be unable to tell whether I'm controlling the main or sub beast.

"Looks like you're in a tough battle, sempais."

"Shut up! Just watch, damned Sakamoto!"

But even after pushing my summoned beasts together, my control isn't affected at all. I continue to fight with them, using the main beast on Gozu and the sub beast on Mezu.

As Gozu and Mezu try to swap, both summoned beasts will move. When both of them aim for one, the other summoned beast I control will aim for its original target and attack. I won't make the mistake of falling into disarray just because

it’s a close combat.

“What’s going on? One of those two summoned beasts is controlled by you, isn’t it, Sakamoto!”

“Stop spewing wild speculations, sempai. I can’t do it even if I want to, you know?”

“Then how? It’s absolutely impossible for one person to control two summoned beasts so fluidly!”

I deflected the tip of the spear that the Mezu keeps thrusting out, and the opponent spins it and stabs over with the spear grip. The sub beast takes half a step back to dodge.

“Sempais, aren’t idiots interesting? Once they get hooked onto something in a trance-like manner, they’ll show an abnormal amount of concentration, like a karate idiot, or a kendo idiot. In such situations, being called an ‘idiot’ is a praise of ‘being focused on one particular thing’.”

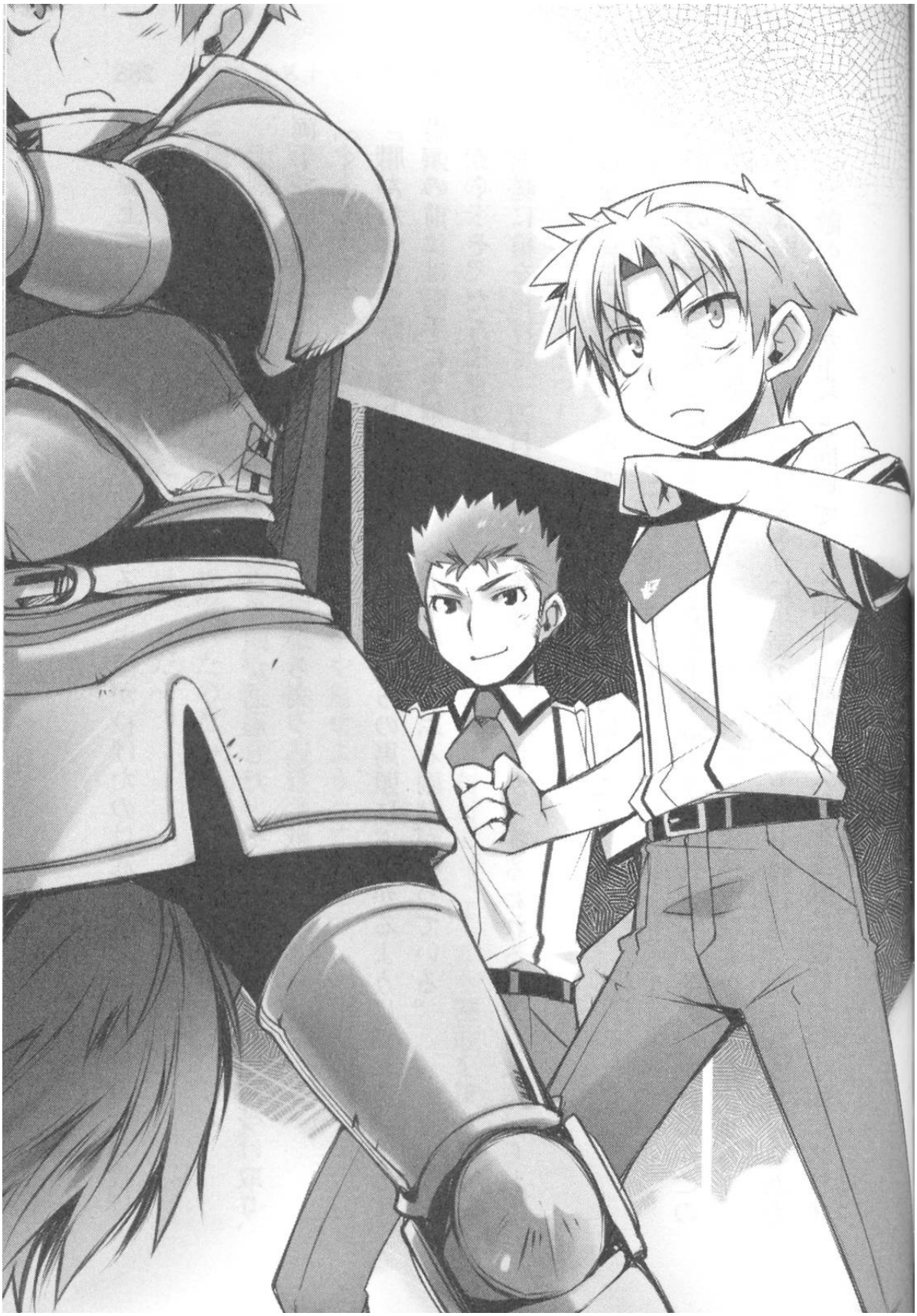
I swing the broadsword down at Gozu, and it takes the blade while sending a flying kick at me. My two summoned beasts haven’t changed attack targets, and up till now, it’s the main beast attacking Gozu, and the sub beast attacking Mezu in this endless battle.

“How annoying. What are you trying to say?”

“Well, to put it simply.”

Gozu and Mezu attack at the same time, and the main and sub beasts move away from the side and switch defensive positions.

“—You guys activated this guy's switch the moment you made Himeji cry.”



Gozu and Mezu, which are surrounded by the main and sub beasts, immediately get into a defensive position. My eyes are staring at these preys, and I let both beasts throw their weapons. The one to attack first is the main beast, and the second beast throws it despite a missed timing.

“‘‘—!?”’’

The duo, which had been used to close combat up till now, never expected a ‘throwing’ attack and can only duck awkwardly to avoid the attack. And then, the thrown weapons return to the beasts that are now standing diagonally from each other. The main beast throws the broadsword, and the sub beast throws the,

“Head!?”

The head that was viewed as a weakness flies by Gozu and Mezu that ducked down to avoid the attacks. The main beast then suddenly charges forward, reaching its arms forward while looking like it’s protecting its weaknesses, and raises its shoulder to slam into Gozu.

“Gu…u…”

As they ducked down, Gozu can’t stabilize itself when the main beast slammed into it, and it falls back on Mezu. Both summoned beasts trip over. At this moment, the sub beast readies the broadsword with both hands, standing right in front of Mezu and ready to deal the fatal blow.

“No…no way…”

The next moment, Mezu hurriedly raises its spear to block the first blade. But no matter how quick it is, it can’t dodge the incoming second strike from the side.

Thus, one hit from the Dullahan cleaves the Mezu’s body horizontally in half.

“Stop joking around! In this situation, how can we—”

Gozu awkwardly stands up as it steps on Mezu’s carcass. Right now, it’s too late to do anything.

The main beast deliberately grabs the head that was deemed a weakness, shaking it right in front of Gozu as if it’s showing off a treasure, and suddenly throws it

right at Gozu. The opponent's attention will be focused on the thing flying at it, and will naturally be attracted by it in mid-air. At this moment, the sub beast throws the broadsword in its hand to the main beast, and brings Gozu down with a sliding tackle.

"Gu…!"

The main beast steps on Gozu's body that's tripped by the sub beast, ridding it of the freedom to move. Now the opponent can't move.

"Looks like the winner's decided, huh, sempai?"

"…You two bastards…!"

My Dullahan raises the broadsword in its hands and pierces the head of the monster lying on the floor. Now, the Toko-Natsu pair can't turn defeat into victory no matter how unwilling they are. In other words—

"This duel's our win here, sempai."

"……Gek! What do you…want me to do?"

Natsukawa-sempai vengefully asks as he realizes his defeat.

My wish was very clear right from the beginning. It's because I wanted him to do this that I set this stupid wager that 'the loser has to obediently follow what the winner asks of them'.

That's right, there's only one thing I want these two guys to do.

"—I want you guys to apologize to Himeji-san."

GOZU & MEZU

The Final Question

Please answer the following question

Please list the sizes of the following elements in increasing relative atomic mass, and write the correct names

'Ne Ga H O Po I Na'

Himeji Mizuki's answer:

H: Hydrogen O: Oxygen Ne: Neon Na: Sodium Ga: Gallium I: Iodine Po: Polonium

Teacher's Comment:

Correct answer. Gallium and Polonium are elements that appear more rarely. Sensei was thinking whether this question was too difficult, but you never disappointed her here, Himeji-san.

Tsuchiya Kouta's answer:

H: A Na: Per O: verted Ne: Re Ga: quest I: Please! Po: Pop! (*/▽*)[20]

Teacher's Comment:

The order other than sodium itself is all correct, and that really vexes me here.

MIZUKI HIMEJI

“Heh~ I didn’t expect it to be so interesting, and the interior decorations are really great.”

“As expected of an activity financed by the school. Let’s play again when the Bon Festival begins.”

“The teachers will be in charge of scaring this time, right? I really wonder what kind of summoned beast Takahashi-sensei will have.”

“But what’ll happen if it’s Ironman?”

“There, there shouldn’t be any problems, I guess…it’s open to the public after all, so they’ll probably show summoned beasts that people are able to stand seeing…”

“I really hope so too…”

Once the test of courage event’s over, the relief of the last day of summer remedials and the summer briefing being over rush up my mind. Also, the principal allows us to not deal with the cleaning up. As we leave the school, everyone’s showing carefree and relieved expressions, except for the 3rd years who can’t hide their troubled looks after merely losing this battle. Now, all’s left is—

“…Yoshii.”

“Ah, Kirishima-san. What is it?”

“…Go to the roof.”

“? The roof? The one telling me to go there is—”

“…Hurry. Mizuki is waiting for you.”

“Himeji-san is waiting for me? Got it! Thanks, Kirishima-san.”

Now, all that’s left is Himeji-san’s issues.

I follow Kirishima-san's instructions and hurry through the corridors, taking two steps at a time as I run up the stairs. I've been wondering why I haven't seen her up till now. So she ran to the roof.

"What is it, Shouko? Sounds like you and Himeji got close, actually calling her name like that."

"…Un"

"What's with this change of attitude?"

"…Because she still worked hard even when she's scared. I like this kind of people."

"…"

"…I really do."

"Why are you looking at me with such an expression!? I'm not scared of anything, and I don't have that lofty emotion to work hard!"

"…Then, I'll take your word for it."

"Gu…! The way you're saying it really irritates me…!"

"Himeji-san!"

Once I got to the roof, I immediately find Himeji-san, who's curled up while sitting in a corner.

"Ah…Akihisa-kun…"

On seeing my face, Himeji-san immediately lowers her stare in an embarrassed manner…it looks like her eyes are a little red.

"It's about time to go home. It's the real summer vacation tomorrow. I'm really looking forward to it, you know?"

"…"

“Actually, my sister said before going overseas that she wants to go to the seaside to play once she comes back, and she even rented a vehicle. If you have the time, why don’t you come along with us, Himeji-san?”

“…”

Himeji-san’s dejected expression doesn’t change even with my invitation. Now what should I do…

I scratch my cheeks while not knowing what to do. After a while, Himeji-san says,

“Just now…”

“Hm? Himeji-san, what did you say?”

“Just now, those two sempais came here and apologized to me.”

“Ah, is that so.”

The 3rd years classrooms are on the 4th floor, so they immediately discovered that Himeji-san is hiding here? Either way, I am grateful to them for sticking to our agreement.

“The reason why they would come here to apologize…is because of you, Akihisa-kun, right?”

“Eh? Ah, un…not really.”

“Please don’t joke around with me.”

“…Well, I guess I did…”

Was I found out? Did the Toko-Natsu blabber off at her again?

“I’m sorry…that it ended up like this again…always because I caused you to he…”

“Eh? No, you’re mistaken, Himeji-san. It’s really not like that!”

“I’m not mistaken at all! It has been like this all the time in the past! I couldn’t

help at all! I only ended up pulling everyone back, and I still had to rely on Akihisa-kun for help…”

“Himeji…san…”

“I really…hate this me…I can’t help in any way, I can only cause trouble to everyone, always relying on you, Akihisa-kun! I really hate this me who’s useless in everything, I really hate it all!”

The large teardrops that appear in Himeji-san’s eyes slide down the face drop by drop.

Why does she hate herself? Himeji-san has been working so hard for us.

“Himeji-san, listen to me.”

“…Yes.”

“You really looked cool when you told off those sempais loudly just now.”

“Eh…”

Is it beyond her expectations to be praised as cool? Himeji-san can’t help but lift her face and look at me.

“You’re rather amazing to tell them off like that.”

“Do, don’t joke around! That’s not what I want to talk—”

“Also…I really feel happy too! You threw quite the huge tantrum for our sake. It’s also because of those words you said that Yuuji and I would work so hard to win that battle. Really thank you.”

I earnestly give a bow to Himeji-san.

I really can’t use words to describe the emotions back then. She was trying so hard to endure, made it all the way to the final checkpoint, but her hard work was wasted on Yuuji and me, and I really have to feel sorry for that—she’d rather waste that hard work just to speak up for us, and that touches me as well. Such conflicting emotions are raging in my heart, tangled up and can’t be

distinguished.

“But…I didn’t manage to wear out the opponent’s scores at all…”

“That’s not the issue at all. There are many important things that can’t be expressed in points—didn’t you say this before, Himeji-san? It’s like how you rated Yuuji and me other than in terms of grades that we got encouraged by you non-academic wise Himeji-san.”

It’s because Himeji-san worked so hard in the haunted house that Yuuji and I worked exceptionally hard this time. If not for the words she said back then, I guess Yuuji and I wouldn’t have bothered taking that fight.

“Akihisa…kun…”

“Also, we’ll have to rely on your points to fight in the summoning wars later on. You’re the main fighting force in F class.”

Himeji-san had been very active during our first war and the battle against D class. We’ll definitely get our ultimate wish of beating A class with Himeji-san’s help.

On hearing me say this, Himeji-san reaches her hand to wipe away the tears from her eyes and finally shows that usual cute smile on her face. Great, it’s back to the usual Himeji-san.

“Thank you very much, Akihisa-kun.”

“No, I should be the one thanking you.”

“Now that you say this, I feel like I gained some self-confidence.”

“Ah, that’s great.”

It’s really great that Himeji-san can abandon such negative thoughts.

“Since you say we’re helping each other, I shouldn’t be too polite here, should I?”

“Un, of course.”

“Then, Akihisa-kun.”

“Nn? What is it, Himeji-san?”

“Please call me ‘Mizuki’ from now on.”

“What?”

Why is she saying such things out of a sudden?

“I’ve been bothered. You always called Sakamoto-kun ‘Yuuji’, Kinoshita-kun ‘Hideyoshi’, Tsuchiya-kun by his nickname, and even ‘Minami’ for Minami-chan. But you keep calling me ‘Himeji-san’; family name aside, you even add the –san behind.”

“Ah, ahh…I see. You’re right…”

“So I hope you can just call me ‘Mizuki’ like how you call others.”

“Ah…about that.”

“…You’re not willing?”

“No, it’s not that I’m not willing…”

This atmosphere is really irresistible…

“Himeji-san, listen to me…”

“I hear you.”

“Actually…the reason why I call you this is a complicated reason that’s hard to explain…”

“Reason? What reason? Please tell me.”

“No, it’s really hard for me to explain this, so please stop asking anymore, please~”

“Nope. I won’t accept it easily if you don’t explain it.”

Uu…this is really bad…

“...Will you laugh at me?”

“I won’t.”

“…Will you tell anyone else about this?”

“I won’t.”

Himeji-san’s expression is rather serious.

What should I do…it’s like she doesn’t want to let me run away from this issue…

“Actually, about that…it’s…”

“Yes?”

“I studied in the same elementary school as you, Himeji-san.”

“That’s right.”

“So if I call you by your name, I’ll end up calling you ‘Mizuki-chan’ like before. It’s kind of awkward. I mean, just think about it. We’re high school students, and if I add a ‘chan’ to it, this is too—”

“You’re lying. You’ve been calling me only by my family once we entered high school, Akihisa-kun. You never called me by my name.”

“Tha, that’s…because…”

Guu…! She’s really pressing on…Himeji-san’s outstanding memory is really irritating now!

“Because?”

“…You really won’t laugh at me?”

“I definitely won’t laugh at me.”

“…You definitely won’t tell anyone else?”

“I definitely won’t tell anyone.”

Not good. I have nowhere else to run to.

Uu…this is the greatest embarrassment of my life…

“Actually…it’s…”

“Yes?”

“I did think of calling you by your name before, Himeji-san.”

“And then?”

“And then…I secretly trained at home how to call you by your name…”

“…Eh?”

Himeji-san can’t help but widen her eyes. It can’t be helped that she’ll be so surprised. People normally won’t be practicing calling their classmates by their names anyway.

UGAH! This is really embarrassing! I already decided to keep this hidden in my heart and never mention it to anyone!

“That’s how it is. So I better call you ‘Himeji-san’ in the future! Is that okay?”

END THIS TOPIC NOW! HURRY UP AND END IT NOW! ERASE THIS CONVERSATION FROM MY MEMORY! OR ELSE I’LL HAVE A MENTAL TRAUMA!

“I understand. Since you say so, I’ll let things remain for now.”

“Is, is that so…thank you…”

“Also, I do feel rather happy in a certain way that you would think of calling me in another way instead of calling me in a neutral manner.”[21]

“Heh?”

What does that mean?

“Since you’re willing to share your embarrassing side with me, I’ll tell you a little secret of mine.”

“Eh? Himeji-san’s secret?”

I want to know! I really want to know!

“Actually—”

Himeji-san keeps her voice down as she slowly brings her lips to my ears.

“My first crush—is still going strong.”

After saying that, something soft gently sticks on my cheek.

That’s weird? This is…

“HIHIHIHIHIHIHIMEJI-SAN? WHAT DID YOU—”

“Let’s go, Akihisa-kun. We should be going home now. Summer vacation is finally starting. We have to hurry and come up with all sorts of travelling plans.”

“No, Himeji-san! Now’s not the time to care about travel plans! Listen to me!”

“I really look forward to this summer vacation.”

“Wait a moment! Himeji-san! Wait!”

From tomorrow onwards, it’ll be the summer vacation that really belongs to us.

What will happen this year?

“Oh yeah, Himeji-san…”

“What is it, Akihisa-kun?”

“If, just if—if I have something bad to say about your cooking, what will you do?”

“What else?”

“What else?”

“I’ll keep cooking for you to eat everyday to improve! Perseverance is the power to improve.”

“Tha, that’s right! It’s really just like you, Himeji-san!”

“Un!”

I get a response that I expected. Since I can’t improve the current situation, I might as well not say anything else for now. It’s not that I have some concerns or want to keep my distance, but simply because I’m thinking about ensuring my life’s safe. I better not tell her about my thoughts regarding her cooking—so as to prevent the hellish life that will come everyday.

☆

“Oi, Akihisa, didn’t you say you’re going to the seaside to play? Which sea?”

“I guess it’s a certain place I went to when I was young.”

“The seaside…if possible, I prefer to go to the mountains…”

“Me, me too…”

“Whether it’s going to the sea or the pool, I like them all!”

“…I don’t hate them.”

Everyone’s gathered at my house to discuss the seaside trip beforehand.

Since we rented a vehicle, that means that we can go to several other places once we head out early, finish playing at the seaside and go back home, so it’s important to check on what we can do beforehand.

“I’d say, it’ll be really great if there’s a festival nearby.”

“Ah, that’s a good idea. Do you know anywhere a festival will be held?”

“…Swimsuits and yukatas…can I really make it back alive…”

I really worry whether Muttsurini can take it—physically and mentally.

Prrr!!

“Ah, sorry. I’ll go get the phone.”

“Oh, go ahead.”

I take the phone and walk out of the living room. Who’s calling here—eh? Nee-san? Is there something?

(Hello, is that Aki-kun?)

“Un, nee-san, what is it?”

(I want to talk to you about the seaside trip we mentioned before.)

“Ah, perfect timing. I’m checking on which fun places we can go.”

(I see, as for where we’re going—)

“Un, what is it?”

(I already booked a chalet where we used to stay at before.)

“Eh? Cha…let…”

(That’s right. A chalet.)

“Nee-san, about that…”

(What is it?)

“Booking a chalet. That means…we’re staying overnight?”

(Yes. I want to go to a far away place when we have the chance, and we’ll have an overnight trip there.)

“Ah, is, is that so? I’m really looking forward to it, ahahahahaha.”

(What’s with you, Aki-kun? Is there anything bad with an overnight trip?)

“Ah, no. I did invite Yuuji and *the others*, so it might not be convenient to stay overnight…”

(Nee-san won’t mind. Us siblings can go out and play whenever we want to, and you did cause Yuuji quite some trouble during the last end-of-term exams, so just invite them along.)

“Is that so? That’s really great! Nee-san, you mean that Yuuji and *the rest* can come along, right?”

(Un, I do mean this.)

“Got it! Thanks nee-san! That’ll be it for now!”

(Aki-kun. I suppose you should know, but if it’s a girl—)

Buuu

“…Didn’t expect this to happen…”

“The seaside, is it~ it’ll be troublesome to prepare for it, but I’m really looking forward to it.”

“I have to prepare the swimsuits too.”

“I’ll go buy a new suit then~”

“…Looking forward to it.”

“It’s really great to go out during the summer.”

The intoxicating bouquet-like voices of the girls can be heard from the living room.

But right now, there are two things I have to do.

One, I have to explain to everyone that we have to stay overnight this time.

As for the other…

“Hello? Is this the A&E?”

I better prepare blood bags to endure the overbearing punishment inflicted on me once nee-san knows that girls will be taking part in this trip!

Author's Notes

I AM REALLY SORRY, EVERYONE!

by Inoue Kenji

I am really sorry for this sudden apology. I am the author in charge of writing this volume, Inoue Kenji.

Actually, there was a mistake in a test question in the last volume <<Baka to Tesuto to Syokanjuu 5>>, so I will begin this afterword by talking about this, correcting it, and ask for an apology from all the readers. The wrong question here is the 7th question.

Wrong: In 334 BC, the final king of the Achaemenid Empire, (_____) started the (_____).

Correct: In 334 BC, having beaten the final king of the Achaemenid Empire, Darius III, (_____) started the (_____).

The last king of the Achaemenid Empire was **Darius the Third**, and Alexander the Great **did not lose in his battles** against Darius the Third in the battle of Issus and the battle of Erbil. [1]

This modern school-life story Baka Test now has some fictitious war history mixed in. To prevent this from happening again, I will work hard in the future. I sincerely apologize to everyone here. I am really sorry.

Alright, talking about this here makes me really tentatively and tense such that

my tongue is dry. I will talk about those usual trivial stuff in my afterwords like usual. If you do not mind, please read on.

It is a short story that happened in the winter after I became a college student.

Our family had a rare chance of getting together during the New Year period, and my older brother and I, my parents had this rare opportunity to keep drinking and chatting. Dad was drinking much faster than usual, probably because he was relieved that his sons are now old enough to drink, and soon fell victim to the power of booze and started sleeping.

As for mom, she was not used to drinking, and got drunk and excited.

At this moment, mom suddenly started chatting with us about the past.

Mom: “Your dad always had a huge crush on me.”

Mom started describing her love story with dad as he himself was sleeping and unable to verify this. My brother, who never got drunk, could only give a wry smile and answer mom’s drunk words with ‘yes yes’.

Mom: “Your dad was really~ devotedly attached to me!”

Brother: “Really? That’s great.”

Mom: “I never had to worry about him cheating on me outside.”

To be honest, even if it were my parents we are talking about here, I do not have much interest in other people’s love stories. My older brother and I felt bothered, but we could only continue hearing out mom.

Brother: “Then, how did you two know each other?”

My brother, who knew how to deal with such things, asks mom.

The encounter between mom and dad? It is slightly more interesting than their love story. How did those two know each other, what happened, and what caused them to tie the knot to live their lives together? Such developments happened before, bringing about me as an existence, so I started to have a little interest in this topic.

Mom: “Eh~well, your dad and I were working in the same company…”

Brother and I: “Fm fm.”

Mom: “I remember, the first time we met—”

Mom tried to search her drunken mind for her memories.

The kind mother and the respectful father. The encounter between these two…

Mom: “I remember the first thing I told your dad was to shout at him really loudly ‘you obscene man!’”

All respect I had for my dad vanished at that instant.

Brother: “What did dad do exactly to you?”

Brother looks extremely intrigued as well.

It can’t be helped. No matter how anyone thinks about this, this first line is not about love, but a criminal charge, right? If mom told us that they fell in love in the court, what should we as their children react?

Me: “What happened back then? Why did you say such a thing?”

Mom: “The ‘You obscene man’ line?”

Me: “Un.”

My mom (according to her) graduated from a school that specialized in raising noble girls, so anything that might be something trivial to others may look damning to her. Also, they got married later on, so I guess it should not be anything much,

Mom: “That night, your dad and I were the only ones in the lift, and then he…”

Not good. I sense a crime!

Brother: “Speaking of which, you two managed to get managed in the end after such an encounter. I would say that dad is rather amazing in a certain sense…”

My brother muttered beside me. I have the same feeling.

The impression dad gives me went from ‘an amazing dad who built an outstanding position in his workplace’ to ‘a man who started a love relationship after being scolded and got married’, but my dad is really amazing, if I have to say. Unfortunately, this son of his here does not have his overwhelming chick magnet moves. Our dad has such an important duty of passing this skill down besides just helping to solve our homework…! Speaking of which, my mom recently has been encouraging me over the phone that ‘marriage isn’t everything in life’. I say, what is wrong with her? Is it really that interesting to bully her son like that? (*On a side note, my dad did not do anything criminal back then, but it really left a bad impression on my mom.)

Let us leave such stupid stuff aside for now. It is about time for me to say my usual thanks.

To Haga-san in charge of illustrations, Akira in the colored illustrations is way too cute! That was really eye-candy to me!

Kagaya-san in charge of design, I am really sorry for forcing you to finish the design in such a short time…

And to my editor-in-charge N-sama. The next volume, the next volume, I will go according to plan…! I am really sorry for troubling you all the time…

And of course, to all the readers, I have very grateful that you read this idiot story. Thanks to all the readers who pointed out those mistakes. You really helped me out there. It is because of every reader's care that I can continue to work hard. It will be this author's greatest happiness if everyone is still willing to support this story.

Then, regarding the content for the next volume…I guess I will be writing some short stories. I will begin first with the 'Hideyoshi and Yuuko' everyone looks forward to, and I expect to add 'the overnight seaside trip (front & back)' to the story. It should be the easier to read the short stories as compared to the main story where the romance is getting stronger, and I heavily recommend it to all those who wish for simply stupid comedy. I also intend to write a short story about how Shouko fell for Yuuji…this will be the first time I will be writing a love story in the 3rd person narrative. It is very different from the usual Baka Test, so I am really fearful here…I wonder how every reader will feel. However, I will make sure not to say such things like sou-uke so easily, and I have to restrain myself especially when I am surfing websites…!

Then, let us meet on the next volume of the Baka Test stage.

あとがき。

今回は暑苦しく
始まったので…

むさ苦しい絵で
〆てみました！
翔子さん以外には
うれしくないですね！

2004

Notes

1. ↑ The original word here is Koushuu() which is an supplementary lesson(usually during the summer long holiday) to prepare student for the university entrance exam. There's also other kind of supplementary lesson such as Jyuku() which a student usually sign-up in order catch up with the lesson at school.
2. ↑ Newaza is part of judo's technique that's intended for pinning the opponent.For more info about Judo's technique
3. ↑ Akihisa mixed the Japanese word for "yes" () and the English word "yes" here. I change it into a mixture of the English "yes" and the French word for "yes" (oui) here.
4. ↑ Kyouyu is the archaic form of Sensei. Hideyoshi uses this because he speaks in archaic Japanese.
5. ↑ *The Brothers Karamazov*(the book title) is (Karamazov no Kyoudai) in Japanese. Mutsulini's answer to this question is (Mazo no Kyoudai) where Mazo is Japanese's abbreviation for masochist and Kyoudai means brother(Note that Mutsulini only remembers the "" part of due to his perverted brain). Due to the placement of blank in the question, I change the answer to The Brothers Mazo, where the closer translation should be The Mazo Brothers(The Masochist Brothers), hence the teacher comment.
6. ↑ The teacher is referencing to Mutsulini's answer. Read above for explanation.
7. ↑ Gozu and Mezu are the demons accompanying Bishamonten, one of the 12 devas in Japanese Buddhism. Gozu is a demon with a head resembling an ox while Mezu is a demon with a head resembling a demon. They're said to torture and feed on the flesh of sinner who end up in hell. For further explanation, read Wikipedia.
8. ↑ Noppera-bou...to put it, is a faceless monster, normally with human features.
9. ↑ Futakuchi-onna, a woman with two mouths, one normal, and one on the back of the head. The mouth on the back of the head is basically a 'dark

side' to the woman, complaining about how the woman eats so little, and has a mind on its own.

10. ↑ Taka-onna, basically, the Japanese equivalent of a spectre. Hideous looking, it can stretch itself like Mr Fantastic, albeit only on the waist.
11. ↑ , Given by his inner monologue, I think he combined the words 'pinch' () and 'chance' ().
12. ↑ , or supernatural sounds. Sounds similar to , rap, but yeah, it's a very lame joke.
13. ↑ , kasa-obake, or for archaic form, karakasa-obake. Basically, an umbrella demon. Anyone knows Touhou? Kogasa from Undefinted Fantasic Object is based on it.
14. ↑ Biology is a science, not a humanities subject. This is a mistake on the author's part.
15. ↑ Hideyoshi uses the term " here. Talent in this case.
16. ↑ 'Hime' here refers to 'princess'.
17. ↑ can refer to either serious or heavy.
18. ↑ In case you never noticed it, there was a Sugawa barrier before.
19. ↑ Waka, , A poem. In modern terms, it would be called a Tanka, , short poem.
20. ↑ The original answer Muttsurini gave was: H (*/ ▽*). Look at arrangements of the elements...
21. ↑ Note that -san is a gender neutral honorific.